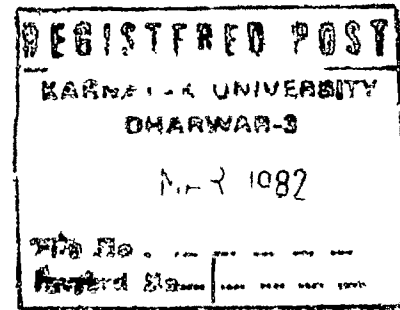


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**EARLY DYNASTIES OF ANDHRA DESA FROM THE FALL OF
SATAVAHANAS TO THE RISE OF EARLY CHALUKYAS**



K. RAMAMOHAN RAO

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE
KARNATAKA UNIVERSITY
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The thesis is further revised
in the light of the comments made by one
of the adjudicators Professor N.Karashima
of Tokyo University and in consultation with
my guide and resubmitted for necessary action.

Date: 21 - 6 - 1983.

K. Ramamohan Rao
(K. RAMAMOCHAN RAO)

C E R T I F I C A T E

I have worked on the topic "Early Dynasties of Andhra Desa from the Fall of Satavahanas to the rise of Early Chalukyas" (with special emphasis on the history and culture of the Vishnukundins) for my Doctoral thesis, under the guidance of Dr. B.K.Guru Raja Rao. This monograph forms entirely my original research and is not the result of the research by anybody else. Further this has not so far been submitted for my Degree to this or any other University.

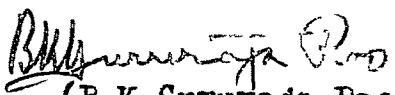
Date: 22-9-1981.

K Ramamohanrao
(K. RAMAMOCHAN RAO)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Early Dynasties of Andhra Desa from the Fall of Satavahanas to the Rise of Early Chalukyas", submitted by Shri K. Ramamohan Rao, for the award of the Degree of Doctor of philosophy in Ancient Indian History and Epigraphy, is based on original source material. He has carried out the research under my guidance. The thesis or part thereof has not been previously submitted for any other Degree.

Mysore
Dated:-


(B.K. Gururaja Rao)
Guide
Reader in Ancient History and
Archaeology
University of Mysore, Mysore-6.

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PART - I

PREFACE

The present work "Early Dynasties of Andhra Desa from the Fall of Satavahanas to the Rise of the Early Chalukyas" embodies in the main my Ph.D. thesis for approval by the Karnataka University. In this work, a sincere effort has been made to present a complete historical survey of the early dynasties of Andhra Desa during the post-Satavahana and pre-Chalukyan period with particular reference to the Vishnukundins who played an important part in the political, cultural and art history of the Andhra Desa. And in doing so both the literary and the archaeological sources, have as far as practicable, been thoroughly utilised.

This study is divided into two parts. The first part contains a brief account of the political history of the dynasties that ruled Andhra Desa from the fall of Satavahanas to the rise of Early Chalukyas and comprehensive study of the Vishnukundins including their genealogy and chronology, their capital, their contribution to language, literature and education, etc., based on literary, epigraphical and archaeological evidences. The second part consists of settlement and structural pattern, religious and secular architecture, art, religion, material culture including pottery, coinage etc., social and economic conditions during the period of ^{the} Vishnukundins. Excavations carried out by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Andhra Pradesh at Keesaragutta has brought to light an extensive fortification now defunct, huge brick structures,

and rich array of antiquities including pottery, terracottas, stuccos, beads, etc., all datable to the Vishnukundin period. The above material besides the material from other excavated sites viz., Gollathagudi, Gummadam in Mahaboobnagar district, Yeleswaram in Nalgonda district, Nelakondapalli in Khammam district, Rajahmundry in East Godavari district has been thoroughly utilised in this study.

In the preparation of this work I have been benefited much by many scholarly works. It would, therefore, be unfair not to record my deep sense of gratitude to the scholars whose works I have thoroughly utilised. I would be failing in my duty if I do not record my profound regards and indebtedness to my revered guide Dr. B.K. Guru Raja Rao, Reader, Ancient History and Archaeology, Mysore University, under whose scholarly shade this work was prepared. As a supervisor, he was always ready to discuss problems connected with my research work. I am ever grateful to him for this and encouragement, besides, valuable guidance, I received from him.

My profound thanks are due to Dr. S.H. Ritti, Professor and Head of the Department, Ancient Indian History and Epigraphy, Karnatak University, Dharwar for the encouragement and assistance at every stage without which this thesis would not have been materialised.

My sincere thanks are also due to Dr.V.V.Krishna Sastry, who has been a source of inspiration for me and from whom I always received encouragement and valuable suggestions.

I am very much grateful to the Department of Archaeology and Museums, A.P., for the financial assistance which I received from it in the form of part-time fellowship for a period of two years during the period of research.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Md. Sharief, Lab. Assistant for giving me assistance concerning all the matters of excavated material from Keesaragutta including preparation of plans, drawings etc., which enabled me to carry out my thesis work. Photographer Sri V. Yellaiah, rightly deserves my thanks for taking photographs of the important structures, materials etc. and for extending his helping hand in my endeavour.

Sri Vasri Dh.U.Venkateswarlu, Typist and Sri P.Satyanarayana, Assistant Curator also deserve my thanks for typing the thesis.

I am obliged to my friends Sri B.Satyanarayana Singh for his invaluable help in preparing maps etc.

My wife Maruthi gave me constant encouragement to complete my work.

Hyderabad

(K. Ramamohan Rao)

I. (1) INTRODUCTION

(a) Scope of Study:

The Andhras have left some glorious monuments which are cherished with reverence and pride by the people of the country and it will be in ^{the} fitness of things if the history and religious and cultural ideals of their founders are studied in more scientific manner and in greater detail. The pre-Chalukyan history of the Andhra Desa since the disappearance of the Satavahanas is a period of fragmentary events of royal dynasties. In less than four and half centuries it saw the Ikshvakus, the Brihatphalayanans, the Salankayanas, the Anandagottrins and the Vishnukundins rise and fall in quick succession. Of all the dynasties that ruled Andhra Desa after the fall of mighty Satavahana ~~empire~~ the Vishnukundins proved to be ^{the} most powerful monarchs. The history of the Vishnukundins like that of the other dynasties that bore sway over our country in ancient times is not recorded in any ancient chronicle, the Puranic or the other, but it is reconstructed on the basis of information furnished by the inscriptions.

The Vishnukundins played an important part in the political cultural and art history of the Andhra Desa. The credit of placing them in the map of Indian art goes to the talented French scholar ~~Dr.~~ G.J. Dubreuil who first brought to the notice of the scholarly world the importance of the Vishnukundin art, ~~and~~ especially architecture.

G.J.Dubreuil's "Ancient History of the Deccan", D.C.Sircar's "The Successors of the Satavahanas in lower Deccan"; K.Gopalachari's "Early History of the Andhra Country"; B.V.Krishnarao's "Early Dynasties of Andhra Desa"; N.Venkataramanayya's "The Vishnukundins"; Sankaranarayanan's "The Vishnukundins and their times" are some of the works on the subject but none of them have attempted to bring to light the cultural achievements of the Vishnukundins, particularly their contribution to art and architecture, religion, language, etc., in a comparative way based on the archaeological evidences.

(b) Sources:

Excavations carried out by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Andhra Pradesh at several places, ^{such as} viz., Keesaragutta, Yeleswaram, Gollathagudi, Gummadam, Nelakondapalli, Rajahmundry etc., in the recent past brought to light the valuable evidences belonging to the Vishnukundins period. Therefore an attempt has been made in this study to bring out a full account of the dynasty, their contribution to art and architecture, religion, language, fully utilising the material from the excavations at Kesaragutta, Yeleswaram etc.

Besides the archaeological evidences, literary and epigraphical sources have also been consulted and utilised wherever necessary. Sanskrit Texts like Brhat-Samhita, Manasara, Arthasastra of Kautilya, Matsya purana, Satapatha Brahmana, and other Silpa Sastras have also been consulted.

I. (2) ANDHRAS AND ANDHRA COUNTRY

Andhra forms a distinct territorial and cultural unit in our country. It has made rich contributions to the stream of Indian History. Traversed by the Eastern Ghats, watered by rivers like the Godavary, the Krishna, the Pennar and the Tungabhadra and enjoying a long maritime coast with its numerous sea port towns, Andhra has been from the earliest times a centre of great political, economic and cultural activity. Situated as it is on the highway between the Aryavarta of the north and the Dravida of the south, it has played a prominent part in the fusion of the cultures of the north and the south and in the development of the Indian culture.

The fertility of its soil, its vast mineral resources, the skill of its artisans and the adventurous spirit of its merchants have always made it one of the richest tracts of the country.

The Andhras have left some glorious monuments which are cherished with reverence and pride by the people of the country. It will be in the fitness of things if the history and religious and cultural ideals of their founders are studied in a more scientific manner and in a greater detail. Our heritage, and in particular that of the Andhras are rich enough in vitality. Several scholars are devoted to historical, cultural and antiquarian research of the Andhras.

The term Andhra is of hoary antiquity. In ancient literature references ~~abound~~^{are abundant} to the Andhra people, their country and capital. The earliest reference is that in the 'Aitareya Brahmana' where the Andhras have been referred to as the descendants of Sage Visvamitra, they having been cursed by him, lived on the borders of the Aryan settlements along with the Pundras, Subaras, Pulindas and Mutibas.¹ ~~Sri~~ R.G.Bhandarkar is of opinion that the Pulindas and Sabaras were wild tribes living round the Vindhya and the two rivers Narmada and Tapti.²

The epic Ramayana the present form of which must be traced to the early centuries before the Christian era refers to the Andhras as a tribe living in the South of Aryavatra and associates them with Pundras, Cholas, Pandyas and Keralas.³ The latter three kingdoms are too well known, and the Pundras were a tribe in Eastern India. Cunningham would have the Paundra-desa around the city of the Pubna while some others identified it with Burdwan. A distinction is also sought to be made between Pundra and Paundra which is unsatisfactory.⁴ We can understand the mention in the Aitareya Brahmana of Non-Aryan tribes like the Pundras and Sabaras with the Andhras as they were all living on the borders of the Aryan settlements, but there is no reason why the Pundras ^{should} be mentioned by Sugriva in his description of the Kingdoms of the South. Beginning with the famous Dandakaranya, the quest is directed through the Andhra and other kingdoms to the tracts about the

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Sahyadri and Kaveri and thence to the Malaya and Tamraparni. The Pundras and their country in this connection seems to be a geographical anomaly.

The Mahabharata, according to one rescension mentions the Andhras, with Pundras, Dravidas, Odras and Kalingas.⁵ Could it be that there was a mere jumbling up of the various kingdoms which Sahadeva conquered without reference to strict geography? Or could it be that the Pundras or a branch thereof migrated to Southern India from their abode in the east? The latter view appears to be more plausible as the evidence of Ramayana and Mahabharata support each other. The Mahabharata couples the Andhras and Kalingas together and the Andhras are mentioned with Odras and Kalingas as tribes living near the Northern coast.⁶ We can thus safely assert that the Andhras have been referred to as a South Indian tribe both in the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Mahabharata (Aranyaparvam Ch.188) further mentions that the Andhra, Saka, Pulinda, Yavana, Kambhoja, and Bahlika kings were not followers of the sacred Aryan dharma; and this is supported by similar references to them in the Sutras of Bodhayana and the Institutes of Manu.⁷

The works of Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali next come in for our consideration. The Sutras of Panini refer to the terms Kosala and Kalinga and the Aryans of his time were not fully conversant with Dakshinapatha or Deccan. Panini lived about 7th century B.C. Katyayana however refers to Pandyas, Kambhojas and Cholas and to the Mahishmati country while

Patanjali goes still further and mentions Kanchipura and Kerala with Mahishmati and Vidarbha. ~~Sir~~ R.G.Bhandarkar concludes, referring to the Edicts of Asoka and the works of the Grammarians, that about a hundred years before Patanjali, 'the whole of the Southern peninsula upto Cape Comorin was in direct communication with the North'. But both Katyayana and Patanjali not to speak of Panini are significantly silent about the Andhras or their country.

The light thrown by classical writers and the Edicts of Asoka on contemporaneous history is immense. Megasthenes describes the Andhras as a powerful nation living in the neighbourhood of Calingae, Modogalingae, Modubae (Mutibas), and Uberae (Sabaras). He also mentions that from the mouths of Ganges, one can travel 625 miles along the coast and reach the Cape of Calingaon and the town of Dandagula. The former has been identified with the promontory of Coringa now an inland town and the latter with Dantapura, capital of Kalinga. Cunningham⁷⁶ identifies Dantapura with Rajamahendri but this is doubtful. Pliny⁸ mentions that the Andhras possessed numerous villages, thirty cities defended by walls and towers, and supplied its king with an army of one hundred thousand infantry two thousand cavalry, and one thousand elephants. The Andhra nation as such possessed a military force second only to that of Chandragupta Maurya. It is clear that whatever might be the political or social status of the Andhras in the days of the Brahmanas, as compared with that of the Aryans, they were a

powerful nation with a wide territory and extensive fortifications in the Mauryan period. It has also been assumed by scholars⁹ that the descriptions of Megasthenes referred only to the independent powers of his time.

The Thirteenth Rock Edict of Asoka couples the Andhras with the Bhoja-Petenikas on the one hand and with the Pulindas on the other. From the enumeration of the various people in the Edict, it would appear that the Andhras were, 'border people' living in an outlying province of Asoka's empire like the Yavanas, Kambhojas and others. A distinction is sought to be drawn by separating the word Petenikas and interpreting it as meaning the people of Paithan, but this is rejected by some scholars.¹⁰ ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ ~~Prof.~~ Rapson in the Cambridge History takes the former view. Adopting the suggestion of E. Senart, a geographical continuity is inferred in the enumeration of the various outlying provinces. The opinion of ^{A.C.} Burnell¹¹ that there were no Telugu Kingdoms during the days of Asoka and that the country was then inhabited by wild tribes is an error based on insufficient information and has been rightly discredited.

The dynasties of the Andhras and Andhra-bhrityas are mentioned in the Matsya, Vayu and other Puranas. The Brahmanda refers to the Andhras along with the Konkanas and Kuntalas of the South. The genealogy of the Mauryas, Sungas, Kanvas and the Andhras given in the Puranas is accepted to a great extent by historians and utilized by them in the reconstruction of the Early history of India.¹² The Skanda Purana which is chronologically assigned to a later date mentions that the Andhras were

one of the five people residing south of the Vidhyas but draws a distinction between the Andhras and Trilingas. The later evidently is a modern distinction. One of the Sunga Kings is also named Andhraka or Odraka.

The Buddhist literature has also some references to the Andhras and their country. In *Sorivaniya Jataka* a city called Andhrapura on the banks of the Telavaha river is referred to. The river is now identified with River Tel or Telingiri on the confines of the Central Provinces. The Jataka stories further mention a brahmin youth who completed his education in Takshasila and went to the Andhra Country to gain practical experience. The Vinaya Texts refer to a city called Satakarnika in the Madhya desa and south of the city lay the Dakshina Janapada. The term is said to refer to the Satakarnis though the name of such a town is not met with elsewhere. There is one reference to Andhrakavindra near Rajagriha and another to Andhavana near Sravasti in Mahavagga but these cannot be taken to be explicit references to the Andhra domination of Magadha as assumed by some scholars. Several Buddhist Texts refer also to the Andhaka Monks who were so named after the country to which they belonged.

The Early Tamil Literature of the Sangam period does not help us as nowhere in it the Andhras are referred to by name. There are very many references to Vadugar, Vaduka, Desa or Vadugavali, meaning thereby the northerners of thier country. There seems to have been no distinction between the Telugu and Canarese people in that period though by the time of

Silappadikaram their existence was recognised.¹³

Kalidasa in his Raghuvamsa describes how Raghu vanquished the Vangas, Utkalas and Kalingas and proceeded south to the banks of the Kaveri but makes no mention of the Andhras or their ruler. Whatever date we might assign to Kalidasa, whether in the 1st century B.C. or 4th century A.D., it is inexplicable why the Andhra country should not have been mentioned by name. There may be political reasons for this deliberate omission. Kalidasa would seem to be the court-poet of the Guptas, who were allies of the Vakatakas, Kadambas and the Andhras (Vishnukundins). Kalidasa would seem to have flourished in the 5th century A.D. The earliest date would fall within the Satavahana period while the latter would be proximate to the date of the expedition of Samudra Gupta to the South; and the latter's pillar inscription mentions Mahendra of Kosala, Vyaghraraja of Mahakantara, Mantaraja of Kurala, Mahendra of Pishtapura, Svamidatta of Kottura, Damana of Erandapalla, Vishnugopa of Kanchi, Nilaraja of Avamukta. Hastivarma of Vengi, Ugrasena of Palakka and Kubera of Devarashtra. The inscription makes no mention of the Andhra King as such as there was no paramount ruler of the entire territory and there were only petty chieftains ruling over separate tracts thereof. It is now certain that the terms Erandapalla and Davarashtra refer to the tracts of country about Chicacole, and Yellamanchili.

Varahmihira in his Brihat samhita mentions the Andhra country along with the Vidarbha, Vatsa and Chedi countries.

Vatsyayana whose date is uncertain, the later limit being placed at 400 A.D. throws a flood of light on the social life of the period including that of the Andhras¹⁴ and, mentions that a king named Kuntala Satakarni unwittingly killed his wife with a kartari during an amorous sport. The author of the commentary Jayamangala of the 10th century comments on the word Andhra and says that the country south of the Narmada in the Dakshinapatha and east of the Karnataka country therein is the country of the Andhras.

The Dasa Kumara Charita of Dandin^{14a} refers to an Andhranagar within a few days journey from Kalinga ruled by Jayasimha with a very big lake near to it. The book further mentions that the ruler of Kalinga became a joint ruler of Andhra and Kalinga countries. The city Andhranagara with a big lake in its neighbourhood points unmistakeably to the capital city of Vengi, and the lake referred to is the Kolleru. Attempts have no doubt been made to locate the same further north near Warangal but it is ludicrous to think of Warangal or its confines in the 6th or 7th century A.D. when the capital city of Vengi was enjoying its pristine glory.

The light thrown by the Travels of Hiuen Tsang¹⁵ on the geography of India at about this time is illuminating. The pilgrim reached Orissa and from thence marching south-west through forests reached the countries of Konyodha and Kalinga. From Kalinga, he went north-west and reached Southern Kosala and passing south-east from it, he went to the kingdom of Andhra and described a large Sangharama by the side of its capital Ping-ki-lo, which is identified with Vengi. Going south, he

reached Dhanakataka or Maha Andhra and described the two Sanghramas of Puravasila and Avarasila to the east and west of the city. This description indicates that in the 7th century A.D., the Kingdoms of Andhra and Dhanakataka were distinct with separate capital cities.

At about this time, Kumarila Bhatta, the Commentator of Jaimini's Purva-Mimamsa Sutras refers to the Andhra Dravida Bhasha, and critics have taken the term to mean the Vernaculars prevalent in the Andhra and Dravida countries and assumed that the division of Andhra into Telugu and Canarese must have taken place at a later period. Whatever might be the origin of Telugu and Canarese, the view of Kumarila that there was an Andhra language prevalent in his time seems to be beyond dispute. This is supported by Hiuen Tsang who says there was a different language prevalent in the Andhra country, but the script was the same as in the North. A Jain work Jina Vijaya in referring to Kumarila says that he was an Andhra born in a village called Jayamangala situated in the border land of Utkala and Andhra countries.¹⁶

Early Inscriptions mention the Andhrapatha or Andhramandala which was merely a portion of Dakshinapatha, the territory south of the Vindhyas. The earliest inscription available is the Mayidavolu Prakrit Inscription¹⁷ of Sivakkandavarma, about the 4th century A.D. The grant was issued from Kanchipura the capital, and bestows a village Viripara in the Andhrapatha to two Brahmins and conveys the information to the King's governor at Dhanakataka. Some scholars have taken the view that

Sivaskandavarma was a contemporary of the later Satavahanas of the 2nd century A.D. This is the earliest inscription available to us which mentions the Andhrapatha. Early Tamil grants have always described the country as Vadugavali and the Andhras as Vadugar (Northerners). The Udayendiram plates of Vikramaditya II¹⁸ which by some is assumed to be spurious, and another Bana grant of the fourth century¹⁹ mention the country of the Andhras. The latter even goes to the extent of including the Kolar District of ~~Mysore~~ ^{Karnataka} in the Andhramandala.

The references so far mentioned clearly indicate that the Andhras were a powerful ~~nation~~ ruling over a portion of the Deccan, south of the Vindhyas ever since the Mauryan period ~~on~~ even earlier from the days of the Brahmanas.

According to ~~Dr. H. A. Smith~~²⁰ the Andhras ~~Community~~ in the days of Megasthenes ^{was} situated in the delta of the Godavari and Krishna rivers and possessed a military force second only to that of the Mauryas.

In the opinion of ~~Dr.~~ Smith the Andhras were a Dravidian people, now represented by the large population speaking the Telugu language, who occupied the deltas of the Godavari and the Krishna. ~~Mr.~~ P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar²¹ argues that the Andhras were originally a Vindhyan tribe and that the extension of Andhra power from the west to the east down to Godavari and Krishna Valleys.

The name Andhradesa evidently derived its name from the people. From the earliest times the Andhras were one single entity, ⁿethical and cultural. The ancient Andhra Desa is the

territory bounded on the north by Kalinga, on the south by the southern part of the Nellore District and extending from the coast far into the mainland in the west.²²

Pliny (died in 79 A.D.) speaks of several tribes known to have lived in the Deccan proper. Among these must be included the Asmagi (Asmakas on the Godavari the Calinga' nearest the sea (doubtless identical with the Kalingas of the eastern coast) the Andharase or the Andhras, occupying the deltas of the Godavari, and the Krishna, the Mohindaeo, Ubarao, Surie, Madubae probably corresponding to the Pulindas, Savaras and Mutibas of the Aitareya Brahmana. The Andhra people are described as a powerful race, ^{occupying} ~~which possesses~~ numerous villages, and thirty towns defended by walls and towers, and ^{who} ~~which~~ supplies ~~its~~ ^{their} kings with an army of 1,00,000/- infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants.²³

As stated earlier the Mayidavolu inscription of about fourth century A.D. locates their country (Andhra patha) in the lower valley of the Krishna in the District round Dhannakada or Amaravati.

The Chezerla inscription²⁴, connects the Andhras with Krishna.

In the days of Hiuen Tsang (seventh century A.D.) An-to-lo, or Andhra, had its capital at Ping-ki-lo or Vengipura, identified with Pedda-vengi, about seven miles north of Ellore in the West Godavari district and ten miles north-west from Colair lake.

In the Eastern Chalukyan records²⁵ the name Andhra is applied to a very wide region bounded on four sides by the

Eastern Ocean (the Bay of Bengal), the Kalahasti Hill (between Nellore and Chittoor) the Mahendra mountain (in Canjam) and Srisaïlam (in Kurnool).

The Sakti Sangama Tantra²⁶ draws a distinction between the Andhra country and another land which it calls Tailangadesa.

The name Trilinga, a variant of Tailanga, is traditionally derived from three shrines, namely those at Kaleswaram, Srisaïlam and Draksharama all of which are located within the territory defined as the Andhra country.

Hsuen Tsang the Chinese pilgrim of the seventh century A.D. must have regarded Vengi and Andhra identical, since he mentions ping-ki-lo or Vengipura as the capital of An-to-lo (Andhra). However, he draws a distinction between this territory and Te-ba-ka-che-ka (Dhanyakataka, i.e. the Amaravati region) to which a note is added in the pilgrim's text ^{which} applies the name 'Great Andhra'. This Great Andhra must have virtually corresponded to the Andhrapatha of an early Pallava charter.²⁷

The antiquity of the word 'Desa' goes back to the days of the Vajasaneyi samhita of the Yajurveda. Though its occurrence in the early Vedic texts is very rare it is more common in the Buddhist texts where it is used as a synonym of "Janapada". In the Asokan inscriptions it appears both singly, as in the fourteenth Rock Edict, and as part of the compound expression desavutika, which occurs in the Second separate Rock Edict. Pallava records mention the desa-dhikritas while those of the Salankayanas refer to desa-dhipatis. It is clear that desa had become the designation of an administrative unit possibly

as early as the time Asoka, and certainly in the early Pallava age. In the post-Pallava period desa is at times used as a bigger unit than a 'vishaya' . At times desa and Vishaya seem to have been used as synonyms. Desa, sometimes meant only a country without any administrative significance, such as Andhra-desa, Kalinga-desa, Karnataka-desa etc.,

Andhra country stretches from the Sahyadri parvat or ~~Vidhyadri~~ range, and the expanse of hill and plateau that connects it with Mahendragiri, and forms the water shed between the Mahanandi and the Godavari in the north, to the Krishna and the Tungabhadra in the south to the Bay of Bengal in the east. The area lies roughly between $13^{\circ}58'$ and $20^{\circ}33'$ north latitude and 77° and $84^{\circ}50'$ east longitude. It covers a wide expanse of territory which presents infinite varieties, of soil and scenery. Wide downs, rolling plains smiling tors and logans, luxuriant forests, rivers tumbling over precipices and leaping in wild water falls and streams foaming in wild torrents along their rugged rocky beds, Combine in one superb panorama the varying aspects of awe and beauty.

The great central upland has an elevation of from 1,000 to 3,000 feet above the sea level with depressions that coincide with the valleys of rivers. It has hills and spurs here and there rising to 3,500 feet and descending by a succession of terraces from the western Ghats towards the east. Geologically the plateau is divided into large areas. The Godavari and its affluent the Manjira cut off the trappean region in the north and the west, covered with luxuriant vegetation, from the

granitic and calcareous country with bare rocks and a sandy soil. The eastern coast line is on the whole unsheltered and deficient in natural harbours safe for ships of deep draught throughout the year. Here, not very far from the mouth of the Krishna, Ptolemy^{27(c)} located the point of departure (Apheterion) for ships bound for Khryse or Suvarnabhumi, the 'golden lands' of Trans-Gangetic India and the islands lying scattered in the neighbouring sea. The great rivers of the country, the Godavari and the Krishna, break through the line of the ghats and form rich deltas which are the graneries of the south.

The series of hills that form the eastern flank of the Deccan plateau and overlook the Bay of Bengal are known as the Eastern Ghats.

The hills and mountains of the Deccan are, especially in the trappean region, often covered with luxuriant ^{or} vegetation, primeval forests lie to the east of the Godavari.

Within the State of Hyderabad vast areas are thickly wooded. Hiuen Tsang speaks of a jungle infested by troops of murderous highway-men between the Dravida country and Kung-kan-na-pu-lo or Kung-ta-na-pu-lo in the Kanarese area, and a great forest ravaged by wild beasts and harried by bands of robbers, on the way from the last mentioned country of Maharashtra.²⁸

According to ~~S.~~ N. Venkataramanayya²⁹ Andhrapatha or the country of the Andhras extended along the banks of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra from the Bay of Bengal to Parigi in the Hindupur taluk of the Anantapur District.

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II. A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY DYNASTIES OF ANDHRA DESA
AFTER THE FALL OF SATAVAHANAS TILL THE RISE OF EARLY
CHALUKYAS

The pre-Chalukyan history of the Andhra-desa since the disappearance of the imperial Satavahanas is a chapter of fragmentary events of several royal dynasties.

The passing away of great Satavahana power gave a tremendous fillip to the disintegrating forces already at work during its decline. The southern part of the empire came under the Pallavas, the south-western parts of the empire under the Chutus and after them ^{the} Kadambas, the Andhradesa fell under the less powerful and more short-lived dynasties. In less than four and a half centuries it saw the Ikshvakus, the kings of the Brihatp^halayana gotra, the Salankayanas, the Kandaras, and the Vishnukundins, rise and fall in quick succession. Gautami-putra, Yajna Sri was the last great ruler of the Andhra-Satavahana dynasty. The reigns of his successors Vijaya, Chanda Sri, and Pulumavi III covering altogether a period of ~~seve~~seventeen years, are of little significance historically. Pulumavi III seems to have placed the region of the Satavahana Vihara (the Bellary district) under Mahasenapathi Khamdanaga. The Myakadoni inscription¹ refers to the 8th regnal year of one Sri Pulumavi of the Satavahana family.

Dr. Suktankar who edited the record assigned it to Pulumavi (II) son of Gautamiputra Satakarni. But, for reasons given by ^{G. T.} Prof. Dubreuil, Pulumavi of this record must have been the last king of the Satavahana dynasty in the list given

in Mastyapurana.² The discovery of the Myakadoni inscription has a very important bearing on the subject; it enlightens the causes of the fall of the Satavahana dynasty.

The rise of the Chutus in the western and southern districts, of the Abhiras in the Nasik area, and of the Ikshvakus in the east, and the relentless pressure of the Sakas of Ujjain, sounded the death knell of the Satavahana empire. But while it lasted, it imparted more stability and security to the life of the people, the inhabitants of the vast regions of the Deccan, than any other Indian power had ever done.

Many empires had come and gone, the Mauryas, Sungas and Kanvas in Magadha, the Chetis in Kalinga, and the Bactrians, Sakas, and Pahlavas in North and North-Western India. Yet the Satavahanas ruled, strong in will and stronger in action.

The Satavahanas had fallen, and none among the new states which had subsequently risen to power in the territories they had dominated had shown the capacity to take over their imperial responsibilities.

The Ikshvakus had carved out a kingdom for themselves in a portion of the Andhra Country, but they were not able to extend their rule much to the north of the Krishna.

The Chutu Satakarnis of North-west ^{Karnataka} Mysore were mere local chiefs, who had neither the ability nor the resources to rise to the imperial position. In the northern Konkan, the Abhiras had founded a principality and had for a short-time succeeded in ousting the western Kshatrapas from their capital. They however, soon ~~sank~~ sank into insignificance and abandoned any effort to expand over the Deccan. The Western Kshatrapas had once

defeated the Satavahanas and had annexed a part of the Deccan to their kingdom; but during the latter half of the third century their power too was on the decline, and they had lost all hope of controlling the politics or the destinies of southern India. In northern India, the Nagas of the Uttara Pradesh and the republics of Rajputana and the Punjab had reasserted their independence and repudiated the Kushan supremacy. Their interest was, however, confined to their own homelands and they had no ambition to bring the Deccan under their hegemony. The political situation was thus quite favourable for an adventurous chief to attempt to found a new house, which might eventually take the place of the great Satavahanas as the paramount power of southern India.

VAKATAKAS

Thus, when the political conditions were favourable for the rise of a central and powerful state in the Deccan, the Vakatakas rose to power in the third quarter of the third century A.D.

G. S. ~~Dr.~~ Dubreuil³ asserts that of all the dynasties of the Deccan that have reigned from the third to the sixth century A.D. the most glorious the most important, the one that must be given the place of honour, the one that has excelled all others, the one that has had the greatest influence on the civilisation of the whole of the Deccan, is unquestionably the illustrious dynasty of the Vakatakas.

The puranas, like the Ajanta record expressly mention Vindhyasakti as the founder of the family and the father of the

illustrious emperor pravarasena I. It was somewhere in Berar ~~of~~ in the Western Madhyapradesh that Vindhyaasakti first carved out a small principality. Vindhyaasakti was a Brahmin of Vishnuvridha gotra. This was not, however, the first time that Brahmins had exchanged sacrificial implements for weapons of war. The Sungas, the Kanvas, and the Satavahanas had done the same a few centuries earlier, and the Kadambas were soon to emulate the example of the Vakatakas.

The Chronology of the Vakataka rulers is as follows:-

Vindhyaasakti	C.A.D.	255-275
Pravarasena I	"	275-335
Rudrasena-I	"	335-360
Prithvishena-I	"	360-385
Rudrasena +II	"	385-390
Prabhavathi Gupta	"	390-410
Pravarasena-II	"	410-440
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="flex: 1; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-left: 20px;"> a son </div> <div style="flex: 2; border-left: 1px solid black; padding-left: 10px; margin-left: 20px;"> Nareendrasena-C.A.D.440-460 </div> </div>		
Devasena CAD 455-475	Prithivisehna CAD 460-480	
Harishena CAD 475-510		

The Vakataka Kingdom was at the zenith of its influence, prestige and power at the death of Harishena the last king of the dynasty. The whole of Hyderabad state, Bombay Maharashtra and Karnataka, Berar and most of ~~the~~ Madhya Pradesh were under the direct administration of Harishena and the northern Konkana, Gujarat, Malwa, the Andhra country and Chattisgarh were with ~~in~~ his sphere of influence. The achievements of Harisena were as notable as those of the emperor pravara-sena I, and they

must have become possible only because he was both an exceptionally efficient ruler and a skilful general when he died in C. A.D.510 the Vakataka kingdom was undoubtedly the most powerful state in India.

The Vakatakas reigned over an empire that occupied a very central position and it is through this dynasty that the high civilisation of the Gupta empire and the sanskrit culture in particular spread throughout the Deccan. In the history of the Deccan the fifth century is the century of Vakatakas.⁴ The Vishnukundins were slowly rising to power in the Andhra country. King Vikramendra thought it politic to recognise the suzerainty of his powerful neighbour Harisena in order to facilitate the expansion of his own kingdom towards the east and he married his son Madhavavarman I to a Vakataka princess, who was probably a grand daughter of Harisana. Vikramendra I the grand father of Vikramendra II is spoken of as an ornament of both the Vishnukundin and the Vakataka families, his father Indrabhattaraka and himself as the crest jewel of and the gem adorning the crown respectively of the Vishnukundin family.⁵

The Ikshvakus

The Ikshvakus are known from inscriptions⁶ discovered on the ruins of the Jaggayyapeta stupa and also Nagarjunakonda and Gurazala in Guntur district. An inscription recently found at Kesanapalli village in the Palnad taluk of Guntur district by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, A.P., throws some light on the dynasty of Ikshvakus. The first three inscriptions

give the name of a king called Madhariputra Sri Virapurisa-datta of the Ikshvakus.⁷ The fourth inscription found at Kesanapalli registers the erection or consecration of a Buddinikambha at the Mahachetiya belonging to the Mulavasi-vihara of the Bahusutiya by the son of Gunabuddhi and the lady Haniga, and a group of merchants including Maha chanida and Chula who perhaps met at the market town Naidgali (identified as Nidigallu in Nalgonda district) for maintaining the unity of the sect, on the 1st day of the first Hemanta paksha in the 13th year of Vasithiputa Siri Chantamula.⁸ The name Chantamula is also known to us from the records of his son Sri Virapurushadatta from Nagarjunakonda and other places. He has been described as "Maharajasa virupakshapati Mahasena parigahatasa hiranakoti go sata sahasa hala sata sahasa dayisa savathesu apathi-hatha samkapasa vasithiputhasa Ikhakusa sirichamtamulasa".

Vasithiputa Sirichamtamula was the founder of the Ikshvaku dynasty. On the dismemberment of the Satavahana empire, their vassals parcelled out their kingdom among themselves, assumed independence and ruled over these principalities as sovereign lords. The puranas also suggest the name, when they record that "Andhra nam Samsithiterajye tesham bhrityanvayenripah". No dynasty other than the Ikshvakus could have ruled over the Krishna Guntur region immediately after the Satavahanas.⁹ The ancestors of the Ikshvakus were Mahatalavarasas under the Satavahanas. After their fall Siri Chantamula founded his dynasty much in the same way as the Maharathi Chutus in the

south-western parts and the Abhiras in the western parts. Siri Chantamula is credited with the performance of Agnistoma Agnihotra, Aswamedha and Vajapeya sacrifices. Vajapeya was a complex rite at the end of which the performer sat upon the throne and was hailed 'Samrat', 'Emperor'. The fact that only three south Indian princes of the early period are said to have performed it (Siri Satakarni I, Pallava Siva Skandavarman and Siri-Chantamula) shows how powerful Siri Chantamula must have been.¹⁰

Madhariputa Siri Virapurisadatta succeeded his father Siri Chantamula. His reign marks a glorious epoch in the history of Buddhism in the Krishna valley, . Like their masters the Satavahanas, the Ikshvakus also contracted matrimonial alliance with the Saka dynasty of Ujjain. They were matrimonially connected with the Kekoyas probably a ruling family of ancient Mysore.¹¹

Siri Virapurasadatta married mahadevi Rudradhara Bhattarika, the daughter of western Kshatrapa king - Rudrasena-I. The alliance ^{probably} ~~would have~~ gained Kshatrapa recognition for the new dynasty. The political sense of the Ikshvakus that dictated an alliance with the western Kshatrapas also dictated an alliance with the Chutus, in south western India of the third century whose kingdom extended as far north as Kanheri and as far east as Anantapur.¹² The son of Madhariputa Siri Virapurasadatta by Vasithi Bhatti deva the daughter of Cantisrinika (one of the sisters of Siri Chantamula) was Khuvula Chantamula.

Thus the most well known rulers of the Ikshvaku family of the Eastern Deccan are Chantamula Siri Virapurushadatta, Ehuvala Chantamula II and possibly Rudapurishadata.¹³

Scholars differ on the duration of the dynasty. The Matsya purana gives us the oldest version 'dvipanchasatam' which may mean 52 or 100. "The Satavahanas could not have disappeared from the political scene before 205 A.D. The Ikshvakus, their successors, could, therefore, have ruled for only 52 and not 100 years!" - argues S.K.Gopalachari.¹⁴

The chronology of the Ikshvaku dynasty is as follows according to D.C.Sircar.¹⁵

Siri Chantamula I C. 223 to 240 A.D.

Virapurishadata C. 240 to 265 A.D.

Ehuvulacantamula II C.265 to 275 A.D.

Only two Ikshvaku inscriptions are dated in cyclic year, while the rest are dated in the regnal years of the respective kings. The first one belongs to the reign of Virapurushadatta I and the Cyclic year 'Vijaya' corresponds to 273 A.D. while the second one belongs to the reign of his son Ehuvala Chantamula and the cyclic year 'Vijaya' corresponds to 313 A.D. Taking into account the regnal years as well as the achievements of the Ikshvaku kings furnished by the inscriptions,

the following chronology is tentatively proposed by some scholars.¹⁶

Maharaja Vasistiputra Sri Chamtamula	227-250 A.D.
Mathariputra Sri Virapurushadatta	250-275 A.D.
Mahasenapati Kumara Eli Bhuvuladasa	Ehavula Chamtamula 275-333 A.D.
Maharaja Kumara Mahasenapati Haritiputra Siri Virapurusaadatta(II)	Rudrapurusadatta 333-44 A.D.

According to Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma¹⁷, the Ikshvaku rule must have come to an end in the later part of the third century or the first part of the fourth Century. One inscription of Rudra Purisadatta was found in Gurazala of Guntur district. The script of the inscription shows that the king Rudrapurisdatta mentioned in it belongs to the Ikshvaku family. It is also evident that he was the son of the Bhuvula Chamtamula. This king donated some land to Halampuraswamy in his fourth regnal year. Halampura is identified as Nagulavaram in the vicinity of Nagarjunakonda. He is the last known king of the dynasty.

If a period of 25 years of rule is assigned to each king, all the four kings put together must have ruled for one hundred years which agrees with the period mentioned in Matsya purana 'dvi panchasatam'

It is quite probable that the Ikshvakus rose to power on the banks of ^{the} Krishna, in the third decade of third century and ruled for a hundred years, ^{with} Vijayapuri as their capital. Their kingdom might have come under the suzerainty of the Pallavas as evidenced by the inscription of Pallava Narasimhavarman found in Palnad taluk of Guntur district.¹⁸

During the time of Rudrapurushadatta the last king of the Ikshvaku dynasty the Pallava king Simhavarman I seems to have launched an attack upon the Ikshvaku kingdom, overtook their authority and annexed their territory. A prakrit inscription of this king in the Brahmi characters of the early 4th century A.D. in the village of Manchikallu in the Palnad taluk of the Guntur district bears testimony to the Pallava occupation of the Ikshvaku kingdom.¹⁹ The Ikshvakus were succeeded by the Vishnukundins, as evidenced by the Archaeological finds discovered during the excavations conducted at Yeleswaram.

The Pallavas:-

The Pallavas were the people of unknown origin, claiming descent from Asvathamam and a Naga princess. The claim of the Bharadvaja gotra, the performance of the Asvamedha and patronage of sanskrit learning, connect the dynasty with the Sungas, while the Brahmana-Naga connection, the performance of vedic sacrifice including the horse sacrifice, early association with the Satavahana janapada in the Bellary district and the use of prakrit in their early records, connect the family with the Satavahanas. There is no question of any

Parthian affinity as the geneological lists of the family are singularly devoid of Parthian nomenclature. The elephants scalp used as a crown is no test of race. The well-known hostility of the family to the Cholas and the decidedly northern character of their culture preclude the possibility of a pure Tamil extraction. The first great Pallava king Sivaskanda varman is known from the inscription found at Mayidavolu (in Guntur) and Hirahadagalli (in Bellary) to have ruled over an extensive empire including Kanchi, Andhrapatha and Satabanirathā and performed the Asvamedha sacrifice. About the middle of the fourth century A.D. the emperor Samudra Gupta invaded southern India, defeated the reigning Pallava king, Vishnugopa and gave a severe blow to the power and prestige of the empire of Kanchi which in the long run, probably led to its disruption. The evidence of the Penagonda plates, the Talgunda inscriptions and the Hebbata grant (I.H.q 1927-151) seems to suggest that the Pallava supremacy continued for some time to be acknowledged by the early Gangas of Anantapur and east Mysore and the early Kadambas of Vijayanti (Banavasi) and Mahisha-vishaya (Mysore).²⁰

The age of Pallavas in South India may be taken to extend roughly from the third century A.D. to the end of the fourth. The Pallavas became powerful about the end of third and beginning of fourth century. The earliest Pallava epigraphs which appear to belong to the first half of the fourth century show that the Pallavas were at the time masters of Andhrapatha as well as the Bellary region. Pallava headquarters in the Andhra

country at the time of Sivaskandavarman, a performer of Aswamedha and other sacrifices, were at Dhannakada (Dhanya-kataka). Their supremacy in Andhradesa appears to have broken down owing to the rise of the Salankayanas of Vengi and the Anandas of Kandarapura.²¹ The whole series of Pallava kings from the beginning to the days of Simhavishnu may be represented by the following table as stated by ^{G.I} ~~Dr.~~ Dubreuil.²²

Bappa-deya	circa A.D.	225-250
Skandavarman	"	250-275
Buddhavarman	"	275-300
(Buddahyan)Kura	"	300-325
Vishnugopa	"	325-350
Skandavarman	A.D.	350-375
Kumaravishnu I	A.D.	375-400
Buddhavarman	A.D.	400-425
Kumaravishnu II	A.D.	425-450
Skandavarman	A.D.	450-475
Simhavarman	A.D.	475-500
Skandavarman	A.D.	500-525
Nandivarman I	A.D.	525-550
Simhavarman	"	550-575
Simhavishnu	"	575-600
Mahendravarman I	A.D.	600-630
Narasimhavarman I	"	630-668
Mahendravarman II	"	668-670
Parameswaravarman I		670-690
Narasimhavarman II		690-715
Parameswaravarman II		715-717

Nandivarman II	A.D.	717-779
Dantivarman	"	779-830
Nandivarman III	"	830-854
Nripatunga	"	854-880
Aparajita	"	880-900

Scholars divided the Pallavas into four categories namely, Pallavas of Prakrit inscriptions, Pallavas of Sanskrit inscriptions, Maha Pallavas, and later Pallavas. Dr. N. Venkataramanayya gives the chronology of the Pallava rulers as follows:²³

Pallavas of Prakrit and Sanskrit inscriptions: -

Veerakurchavarman	A.D.	285-310
Vijaskandavarman	"	310-335
Vishnugopa	"	335-
Trilochanapallava	"	350-
Kumara Vishnu I	"	360-385
Buddhavarma	"	385-410
Kumaravishnu II	"	410-436
Simhavarman I	"	436-460
Skandavarman	"	460-485
Nandivarman I	"	485-510

Maha Pallavas:

Simhavishnu	"	575-600
Mahendravarman I	"	600-630
Narasimhavarman I	"	630-668

Mahendravarman II	A.D.	668-670
↓		
Parameshwaravarman I	"	670-685
↓		
Narasimhavarman II	"	685-730
↓		
Parameswaravarman II	"	730-733

Later Pallavas:

Immadi Nandivarman	"	733-794
Dantivarman	"	794-844
Mumomadi Nandivarman II	"	844-
Nrupatungavarman		
Aparajit	"	888-

No two scholars agree on the chronology of this dynasty and still it is an unsolved riddle.

As indicated by the various records of the Pallavas, the regions over which these kings ruled, before they established their rule over large tracts of the Tamil land in the south ~~which was ruled over~~ by the Cholas, consisted of the southern half of the Telugu districts ruled ~~over~~ by the Andhras and also included a part of the Bellary district. Thus it is clear that the Pallava rulers pushed themselves into the south from the region of the Deccan.²⁴

As seen from the Brahmi inscription of the Pallava king Simhavarman I, he launched an attack upon the Ikshvaku kingdom overthrew their authority and annexed their territory. He constituted the conquered territory into a separate province called the Andhrapatha with Dannakada as its capital and entrusted its government to Yuva Maharaja Sivaskandavarman

believed to be his son.²⁵ After the death of Simhavarman he was succeeded by Sivaskandavarman and he appointed his son Yuva Maharaja Buddhavarman as the Governor of Andhrapatha.²⁶ The Pallavas remained in undisturbed possession of the lower Krishna valley until Samudragupta's invasion took place about the middle of the 4th century A.D. The recently discovered Tummalagudom plate II refer to the invasion of a Pallava king called Simha and his defeat at the hands of Vikramendrabhattara II, sixth king of the Vishnukundin dynasty. The Pallava Simha who led the invasion must have been identical with Simhavarman IV, the predecessor of Simhavishnu and a descendent of Yuva-maharaja Vishnugopa, a younger brother of Simhavarman II. His ancestors were ruling, as shown by their inscriptions, the coastal Andhra country from Tamrapa, Dasanapura, Menmatura and Palakkada. On the death of Nandivarman I, the grandson of Simhavarman II, without issue, Simhavarman IV succeeded him as the supreme sovereign of the Pallava kingdom. Between the Pallavas and the Vishnukundins there existed a long standing enmity. Vishnukundin Govindavarman I dislodged the Pallavas from Dannakada and its neighbourhood and made himself the master of the Krishna valley and his son Madhavavarman II waged war on them in an attempt to push them out of coastal Andhra. Though the Pallavas lost Dannakada and the neighbouring tracts, they still held the bulk of karma-rashtra of which it was the capital, and had been making attempts ever since to recover the territory which they had lost to the Vishnukundins. This led

to constant war between the two kingdoms and Simhavarmans' attack on the Vishnukundin kingdom must have been promoted by the desire to recover what had been lost by his predecessors formerly.²⁷

Matrimonial Alliance of the Royal Family: - 'In his 'Pallavas'

G.J. Dubreuil suggested the possibility of marriage connections ~~having existed~~ between the Andhras and the Pallavas. He writes:- 'Infact, it is quite possible that the Pallava king had married the daughter of 'Sivaskanda Satakarni and that of the 'Yuvamaharaja' of the Pallava dynasty received according to the custom of the Hindus, the name of the Andhra King who was his grandfather'. Secondly, basing his argument on the resemblance of the names of Vishnukundin king Vikramendra and Mahendravigrama, he postulated the marriage between the daughter of Vikramendra I and Simhavishnu whose son was also named after his maternal grandfather.²⁸ Pallava king Mahendravarma I is believed to be the grandson of Vikramendra the Vishnukundin king.²⁹

R. Gopalan³⁰ rejecting the theory of ~~Dr. Jewell~~ ^{G.J.} Dubreuil argues that this is far too fanciful to build such a theory for the following reasons. Mahendravarma means possessed of the valour of Mahendra, Vikramendra means an Indra in valour. They may amount to the same in point of sense ultimately, but they are different names and differently formed. The two terms are not without substantial difference of meaning to the Sanskritist.

There is every reason to believe that the Salankayanas and the Pallavas were related to each other through marriages as a study of the charters belonging to the former dynasty ~~will~~^{would} reveal.³¹ The age of great Pallavas of the Simhavishnu line was the most formative period of south Indian culture. It was an age of great art and literature. A widespread and popular religious revival swept the face of the land and was marked by celebrated contests between the upholders and traducers of Vedic forms of religion. Temple architecture and portrait sculpture attained forms of excellence that have remained models for all later times.

Brihatphalayanakas:

Of the kings of Brihatphalayana gotras, we have but a single copper plate grant i.e. the Kondamudi plates of Maharaja Jayavarman. The Kondamudi plates do not mention the father of Jayavarman. The rise of the dynasty of Maharaja Jayavarman is shrouded in mystery. The cursive writing of the Kondamudi grant obviously places it after the Ikshvaku inscriptions.³² D.C. Sircar attempts to carry Jayavarman's dynasty to the second century B.C.

While editing the grant ~~Dr.~~ Hultzsch says³³ "The alphabet of Jayavarman's inscription shows that he must have lived in the same period as the Pallava king Sivaskandavarman who issued the Mayidavolu plates."

G. J. Prof. Dubreuil says that the unknown predecessor of Sivaskandavarman Pallava ruled between 225-250 A.D. He places Ikshvakus in the third century A.D. and maintains that Jayavarman and Sivaskandavarman were contemporaries.³⁴

Dr. K. Gopalachari contends that the reign of Jayavarman must be placed before that of Yuvamaharaja Sivaskandavarman basing on the epigraphical evidence in Mayidavolu grant and the Carudevi grant.³⁵ He further asserts that Jayavarman's dynasty rose to power before Jayavarman came on the scene.³⁶

G. J. Prof. ~~Jouveau~~ Dubreuil and Dr. Hultzsch viewed that Kudura was the capital of Jayavarman. D. C. Sircar located it in Pityandra, mentioned by Ptolemy as the metropolis of the ~~Misolia~~ ^{Malisolia} region.

G. J. Prof. Dubreuil concludes that the point of departure for vassals bound for Khryse, during the time of Ptolemy, was situated near the mouth of ^{the} Godavari and that it was from there that the civilisation of India, started to go ^{to} ~~over~~ the Burma, Java, Cambodia and Annam and that the Indo-Chinese civilisation came from a port of the Deccan whence the travellers embarked for Indo-China. He identified Koduru, the capital town of Brihatpalayanas as the port town mentioned by Ptolemy.

Maharaja Jayavarman ruled over the country north of ^{the} Krishna in the coastal Andhra region with Koduru in present Krishna district as capital. He was a devotee of Siva and he was described as 'Maheswara Pada Parigrahita'.

There are no evidences to tell us who succeeded Jayavarman after his death. It is quite probable that the Brâhatphalayana dynasty came to an end due to the rise of Salankayanas of Vengi.

Salankayanas:-

Almost contemporaneously with the Pallava kings of the Sanskrit charters, may be placed the Salankayana dynasty. The

word Salankayana appears originally to have been the name of a Vedic Rishi. If Hastivarman of Vengi, who figures among the adversaries of Samudragupta in the Allahabad pillar inscription³⁷ was a Salankayana (identified by Vincent Smith as a Pallava) he may be regarded as the earliest member of his family known hitherto.³⁸ The Allahabad pillar inscription is written on an Asokan sandstone pillar. The characters belong to the Gupta alphabet, the language is partly Sanskrit partly prose and partly verse. The record is undated. It gives abundant details as regards the conquests of Samudragupta, the divisions and kings of India in the fourth century A.D. among the southern kings that Samudragupta conquered and released, the record mentions Mahendra of Kosala, Vyagraraja of Mahakantara, Mantaraja of Kaurala, Mahendra of Pishtapura, Swamidatta of Kottura on the hill, Damana of Erandapalle, Vishnugopa of Kanchi, Nilaraja of Avamukta, Hastivarman of Vengi, Ugrasena of Palakka, Kubera of Devarashtra, Dananjaya of Kausthalapura, and all other kings of the region of the south.³⁹ Salankayana is a gotra and not a dynastic name. For the first time, the Allahabad prasasti of Samudragupta calls Hastivarman of this line a Vaingeyaka. As kings of the Salankayana gotra are the earliest known ones who ruled from Vengipura, their dynasty may be styled Vaingeyaka. We do not know whether Vaingeyakam refers to the kingdom of Vengi or the city of Vengi.⁴⁰

Since the later kings of the Salankayana gotra were in possession of Kudrahara which is identical with the Kudurahara

of Jayavarman's plates, it is certain that the former rose to power at the expense of the rulers of the Brihatphalayan⁴¹.

The following kings are so far known from inscriptions to have belonged to Salankayana dynasty.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Eluru prakrit grant | i) Devavarman |
| 2. Kollair grant | i) Candavarman |
| | ii) Nandivarman, the eldest son of Candavarman |
| 3. Peddavegi grant | i) Hastivarman |
| | ii) Nandivarman I son of Hastivarman |
| | iii) Candavarman, son of Nandivarman I |
| | iv) Nandivarman II, eldest son of Candavarman |
| 4. Kanteru grant (No.1) | i) Skandavarman |
| 5. Kanteru grant (No.2) | i) Nandivarman |

The genealogy and chronology stands thus:

Devavarman	C. 320-345 A.D.
Hasitivarman	C. 345-370 A.D.
Nandivarman	C. 370-395 A.D.
Candavarman	C. 395-420 A.D.
Nandivarman IV	C. 420-445 A.D.
Skandavarman	C. 445-470 A.D.

The Salankayana line is the only dynasty which can be properly called Vaingeyaka as all the grants of Salankayana kings are issued from Vengipura.⁴² The Salankayanas ruled according to ^{G.J} Dubreuil between 350 and 450 A.D. and Burnell

thought that the Kollair grant of Nandivarman may palaeographically be assigned to the 4th century A.D. It is therefore generally accepted that the Salankayanas ruled contemporaneously with the early Guptas.⁴³ (320-467 A.D.) All the Salankayana kings, in their inscriptions, call themselves, "Bhagavan Chitrarathaswami-pad-anudhyata i.e. favoured by the feet of Lord Chitrarathaswamin, which is evidently the name of the family deity of the Salankayana kings of Vengi, Chitrarathaswami mentioned in the Salankayana inscriptions is the Sun god.

D.C.Sircar asserts that the family religion of the Salankayanas was in all probability Saivism and that as such Chitrarathaswamin might possibly be a form of Lord Siva.⁴⁴

The sectarian leaning of different kings varies. Some were Paramamaheswaras while others were Paramabhagavatas. During the Satavahana rule Saivism was in a flourishing condition. Some of the Ikshvaku kings and their feudatories had Saiva leanings. Jayavarman of the Brihatphalayana gotra was a worshipper of Maheswara. The earliest known king of the Vaingeyaka line is a Paramamaheswara. Like the early Pallava kings the later Vaingeyakas are styled paramabhagavatas i.e. worshippers of Vishnu. Perhaps Pallava influence is to be seen in this change.⁴⁵ It appears in fact that these kings came after the invasion of Samudra-Gupta and it is again probable that their kingdom was conquered in the fifth century by the Vishnukundins with the help of the Vakatakas.⁴⁶

There is close resemblance between the names of the members of the Salankayana and the Pallava dynasties such as Skandavarma, Buddhavarma and Nandivarma which also occur in the Pallava copper plates. The figure of the seated bull which frequently finds a place in the seals of the Pallava charters also figures in the Salankayana charters. Further the fact that for more than six generations the Pallavas and the Salankayanas are never known to have come into conflict even once is a significant one, and probably indicates that the Salankayanas were on friendly terms with the Pallavas and continued to rule independently along with them in amity. It is just possible that the Pallavas and the Salankayanas had a common ancestry as Salankayana is a gotra belonging to Bharadvaja clan.

The Salankayanas appear to have exercised political power from about A.D.320 to about 480, when the rise of Vishnukundins, and the ascendancy of the Vakatakas put an end to the political power of these people who are no more heard of in the history of South India.

The Ananda gotra kings:-

Chezarla stone inscription of Kandara's grandson, Mattepadu plates of Damodaravarman issued from Vijayakandara-pura, Gorantla plates of Attivarman are the only sources of information about the line of kings describing themselves as belonging to the Ananda gotra, ruling over part of the Guntur District during the early centuries of the Christian era.⁴⁷ Fleet, while editing the Gorantla plates, assigned

Attivarman to the Pallava family but corrected himself subsequently. Hultzsch, who edited the Mattepadu plates, stated that these chieftains should be named the rulers of the Ananda gotra.

~~Dr.~~ D.C.Sircar calls these kings the Anandas and Ananda kings.⁴⁸ ~~Dr.~~ K.Gopalachari trying to improve upon this, names them the Kandaras, on the ground that the Gorantla plates describe Attivarman as one born in the Kula of king Kandara.⁴⁹

M. Rama Rao stating that these names are unreasonable. ~~He~~ says that it is safest to name these chieftains after their gotra.⁵⁰ M. Rama Rao, rejecting the theories of ~~Dr.~~^{D.C.} Sircar and ~~Dr.~~^{K.} Gopalachari determined the following Chronology of the Ananda gotra king.

Kandara and his grandson	375-400 A.D.
!	
Damodaravarman	435-460 A.D.
!	
Attivarman	480-500 A.D.

The chronology of the rulers of the Ananda gotra can be determined more reasonably by a careful examination of the provenance and contents of the Pallava, Salankayana and Vishnukundin grants and with the aid of a few facts of outstanding importance in contemporary history. Since neither the Allahabad inscription of Samudragupta nor the Kopparam plates of Palakesin II mentions these rulers it may be held that 350 A.D. and 630 A.D. mark the lower and upper limits respectively of Ananda gotra rule. It is known that Pallava Kumaravishnu conquered Kanchi and ruled from the city. His second son Sivaskandavarman, who seems to have ruled over the

Guntur-Nellore region, is said to have obtained a kingdom by his valour.⁵¹ (The Ongondur grant of Vijayaskandavarman in EI. XV pp.249-252) Obviously, the Pallavas lost their hold on this region after the epoch of the early Pallavas of the Prakrit charters and Vishnugopa. Some alien power must have reconquered this region just as his father Kumara Vishnu reconquered Kanchi from the Cholas. It is likely that the Cholas of the south and the Kadambas of the West brought about the down fall of the early Pallavas. Among the successors of this Skandavarman, his grandson Skandavarman (405-435 A.D.) made gifts in the karma - rastra, munda rastra and Vengo rashtra. Obviously, the Pallavas lost the Karma-rashtra during the time of Vishnugopa (435-460 A.D.). This is the second period during which alien rule could have prevailed over the northern Pallava dominion. One grant of Nandivarman of the Salankayana gotra and another of his successor Skandavarman were found at Kanteru in the Guntur taluk, in the heart of the Ananda gotra rulers. Evidently, the later could not have been ruling in this region during the second half of the fifth century. Further, one copper plate grant of the Vishnukundin king Mahavavarman II was found at Ipur in the Tenali taluk and a stone inscription of his at Velpur in the Sattenapalli taluk of the Guntur district. This monarch's grandson issued a copper plate grant, also found at Ipur from Amarapura. This shows that the northern part of the Guntur district was under the Vishnukundins during the later half of the sixth century and precludes the possibility of Ananda gotra rule during the period.

The Gorantla plates state that Attivarman granted land on the southern bank of the Krishna and a village on its northern bank. His rule at Kandarapura and the extension of his influence beyond the river would be possible between 480 A.D. which year saw the end of Salankayana rule. Similarly the discovery of the Mattepadu plates of Damodara varman in the Ongole taluk, which corresponds to the old Karma-rashtra may be taken to indicate the southern extension of his power. This may be assigned to 435-460 A.D. when the Pallavas seem to have lost their hold on Karma-rashtra. Kandara and his grandson may likewise be assigned to the other gap in Pallava rule, in 375-400 A.D.⁵² Probably, the Cholas of the south and the Kadambas of the west brought about the downfall of Sivaskandavarman's family and thereafter scions of the Pallava family ruled in different parts of the Pallava territory. Kandara of the Ananda gotra might have risen to power in the wake of the Gupta invasion and occupied the northern part of the Pallava territory on the east-coast. Kumaravishnu, another scion of the Pallava family, conquered Kanchi and re-established the Pallava rule there. His second son Skandavarman invaded the Guntur-Nellore region and succeeded in occupying Dhanyakataka and the Andhrapatha. Kandara opposed this Pallava king and fought a battle near Dhanyakataka. The Pallava was defeated in this battle and retreated to the south. He then conquered the Karma-rashtra and established his rule over it. The Pallavas were not left in peace. Skandavarman's son Viravarman, who is described as having fought a hundred battles,

was opposed by Kandara and his grandson and had a stormy and trouble some reign. Leaving the Pallava in possession of the Karma-rastra, Kandara consolidated his rule over the northern part of the Guntur district constituting it into two Janapadas, corresponding to the modern Guntur and Narasaraopet taluks.

After the death of Kandara in or about 400 C. A.D. the rule of Ananda gotra family received a set back. Skandavarman III, the contemporary Pallava king, was a powerful ruler. He invaded the Ananda gotra dominion and penetrated as far as Chebrolu Tambrapa from which he issued his Ongodu grant in the 33rd year of his reign.⁵³ This Pallava expansion eclipsed for the time being the Ananda gotra rulers. After the death of the Pallava king, Damodaravarman re-established the power to his family and annexed the Karma-rastra. This acquisition of the Karma-rastra compensated for the loss of the northern territory of the Ananda gotra family to the Salankayanas.

Damodara varman was a devotee of the Buddha and the son of one who was the giver of thousands of cows and the performer of the Hiranyagarbha.⁵⁴ The death of Damodaravarman brought in another period of reverses for the Ananda gotra family. The Pallava king Simhavarman II who succeeded his father Vishnugopa as the ruler of the Andhra territories reconquered the Karma-rastra Simhavarman passed away about this time. Attivarman took full advantage of this situation and re-established the rule of his family. He went beyond Krishna

and annexed the territory on its northern bank as indicated by his Gorantla grant.

The end of the Ananda gotra rulers is lost in obscurity. They were possibly subdued or supplanted by the Salankayanas in the 5th century A.D.

Resume:

The Ikshvakus who succeeded the Satavahanas in the eastern part of their empire ruled upto the first quarter of the fourth century. The Pallavas supplanted the Ikshvakus and conquered and annexed the territory south of the river Krishna. At the same time the Salankayanas assumed authority over the region between the Krishna and ^{the} Godavari rivers and started independent rule from Vengi. Simultaneously Jayavarman of the Brihat¹palayana gotra became the ruler of the Kudurahara province which corresponds to the land on either side of river Krishna near its mouth. The Vishnukundins seems to have ^{risen} ~~rose~~ to power in the first quarter of ~~the~~ fourth century, they slowly extended their empire all over the Andhra country and ruled till the beginning of seventh century. There were the Ananda gotra kings whose rule ended by 500 A.D. All these dynasties were contemporaries of the Pallavas.

Another interesting point to be noted here is that at Nagarjunakonda, Amaravati, and Yeleswaram, the post-Ikshvaku period is characterised by the Vishnukundin coins. Latest findings have yielded copper coins of Vishnukundins right over the post Ikshvaku period.

In his article 'Yeleswaram Excavations' Md. Abdul Whaeed Khan asserts that after Ikshvakus the Nagarjunakonda valley came under the influence of Vishnukundins as noticed by the presence of a hoard of 40 Vishnukundin coins.⁵⁵

If the statement that the last king of the Ikshvakus ruled till the first quarter of the fourth century as stated earlier is accepted then there may not be any difficulty in admitting that the first king or founder of the Vishnukundin dynasty was a contemporary to the Ikshvakus, ^{as indicated by} ~~according to~~ the archaeological evidences now available.

The chronology of the Vishnukundins based on the epigraphical and archaeological evidences is discussed in the next chapter.

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III (i) THE VISHNUKUNDINS

The Vishnukundins rose to power on the down fall of the Ikshvakus in the early decades of the fourth century and ruled upto the end of the sixth century of the Christian era over the lower Deccan and the coastal Andhra. The history of the Vishnukundins is reconstructed on the basis of information furnished by the inscriptions, mostly copper-plate charters registering the gifts made by the rulers of the dynasty to the gods, brahmins, and other religious foundations. These records mention generally the donor and three or more generations of his ancestors, and allude incidentally to their achievements in peace and war, thereby bringing to light events of historical importance.

The following nine copper-plate charters and a stone inscription of the dynasty have come to light so far.

1. The Tummalagudem Copper-plate Grant I¹
2. The Tummalagudem Copper-plate grant II²
3. Chikkulla Copper-plate grant³
4. Tunddi Copper-plate grant⁴
5. Ramathirtham copper-plate grant⁵
6. Ipur Copper-plate grant I⁶
7. Ipur Copper-plate grant II⁷
8. The Pulomburu plates⁸
9. The Khanapur plates⁹
10. The Velpuru stone inscription¹⁰

The available epigraphs furnish the following details:-

1. The Tummalagudem copper-plate grant I:

Place: Tummalagudem, Ramannapet taluk, Nalgonda Dist.

Indravarma, his son Madhavavarma, his son Govindavarma (donor) 37 years.

It is stated that the third king Govindavarman, the donor of the grant, by the strength of his arms obtained his kingdom which consisted of the territories conquered from the other Samantas; was the beloved of the Varnas and asramas as well as of his relatives and followers; was the munificent bestower of gifts of villagers, fields, gold, elephants, horses, cows, bulls, conches, scats, vehicles, drinks, food, vessels, houses, dresses, ornaments, virgins and male and female slaves in thousands; was the builder of several temples, Viharas, assembly halls, sheds for serving water and drinks to the thirsty way-farers, irrigation tanks, wells and graves; was the possessor of wealth enjoyed by the bhikshus, the twice born, the poor, the beggars, the sick, the lowly and the miserable; was the acquirer of insight into the nature of this and the other world by means of the knowledge obtained from the study of the Sastras; was the possessor of a mind highly enlightened for the uplift of all beings. He made a gift of the village Penakapara for a monastery built by his chief queen Parama Mahadevi for the use of Chaturdasarya-Bhikshu-Samgha in the 37th year of his reign.

2. Tummalagudem copper-plate II:

Govindavarman; his son Madhavavarma, asvamedhin; his

son Vikramendra Varma; his son Indrabhattarikavarman, his son Vikramendrabbattarakavarman (donor) 11th regnal year, Saka 488.

It begins with a snaskrit verse wishing success to the arms of uttama-sraya, son of Satyasraya and discribes a genealogy of five generations.

It is said that Govindavarman, the progenitor of this line of kings, embraced Buddhism after studying the doctrines propounded by the Buddha and that he acquired brahmapunya a religious merit resulting in final emancipation the construction of several great viharas rivalling the celestial mansions of the Gods.

Madhavavarman, the second in the line performed all the sacrificial rites such as bahusuvarna, poundarika, Vajapeya Sarvamedha, rajasuya, and purushamedhakratu - sahasra, as enjoined by the scriptures; and he was the lord of the land encircled by the waters of Eastern and the Western seas and the river Reva (Narmada).

Vikramendravarman, the third in the line was the son of Madhavavarman by Vakataka Mahadevi; he was a great poet and a devoted Buddhist.

Indrabhattarakavarman, the fourth king made himself master of the entire domain and destroyed the whole body of his dayadas.

Vikramendrabbattarakavarman, the last ruler and the donor of the present grant, was made king by the ministers while he was still a boy. He was devoted ^{to} the dharma. He led

an expedition against a Pallava king named Simha, and after scoring a victory over him in a battle, returned first to Sakrapura (Indrapura) and made in Saka 488 (A.D. 566 in the 11th year of his reign, a gift of the village of Irenderu to the chaturdasi-aryavara-bhikshusangha residing in the mahavi^{ra} built by parama-bhattarika.

It is also stated that Paramabhattarika was born like Lakshmi in the ocean of the family of Prithvi Mularaja, which was honoured by its alliance with the Vishnukundins, the crest-Jewel of the samantas, that she married Govindaraja who built in all the provinces of the Dakshinapatha wonderful stupas and Viharas adorned with several kinds of sculptural work; who was brilliant like the Kaustubha pendant in the series of necklace viz., the kings on the east and west of the Sriparvatha, and who resembled Govinda (Vishnu) in virtue, beauty and wealth, that she had a son called Madhavavarman whose greatness is manifested by the conquest of the kings of other dynasties; who was adorned by the qualities of diplomacy and prowess and who was charming in personal appearance.

3. Chikkulla plates:

Place: Eluru taluk, West Godavari district.

Madhavavarman, asvamedhin, his son Vikramendravarman; his son Indrabhattarakavarman; his son Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman (donor) 10th regnal year.

Of these kings, Madhavavarman is stated to have been the worshipper of the feet of the God of Sri Parvathaswami, who among the Vishnukundin kings washed off the evils of the world by his ceremonial bath after the performance of eleven

Asvamedha sacrifices. He was the performer of sahasra-
kratu, sarvamedha, bahu suvarna, poundarika, purushamedha,
yudya, Rajasuya, Pradhirajya, Prajapaya, and a thousand other
sacrifices as a consequence of which he became supreme, and
all the kings of the earth bowed before his feet in
submission.

It is stated that Vikramendravarman was born to adorn
both the Vishnukundin and the Vakataka families. Indrabhataraka-
varman is said to have established his ascendancy over the
circle for the earth by the power of his sharp sword;
scattered his ~~day~~ dayadas by knitting his brows; won
victories over elephants squadrons in several chaturdanta
battles; obtained religious merit by establishing ghatikas
as ordained by law; and lived a righteous life in virtue of
his gifts of lands, cows and virgins (Kanyas). He was a
paramamahesvara and maharaja.

Vikramendrabbattarakavarman was famous for the excellent
qualities from his boyhood; and he bore with efficiency all
the burdens of the kingdom. He was a paramamahesvara.

4. Tundi Copper-plate grant:

Place : East Godavari district.

Madhavavarman, asvamedhin; his son Vikramendravarman;
his son Indrabhattarakavarman, his son Vikramendrabbattari^aka-
varman (donor) 14th regnal year.

The first king Madhavavarman is said to have been the
worshipper of the feet of the God Sriparvathaswami, who washed
off the evils of the world by means of the ^acremonial bath

after the performance of eleven asvamedhas; performed sahasra-kratus, eleven bahusuvarnas, eleven poundarikas besides several other sacrifices in virtue of which he acquired the occult power of achieving any thing he desired; and a purusha-medha and other sacrifices as a consequence of which he became a parameshti and Devadideva. The second king of the line Vikramendrabhattarakavarman is said to have adorned by his birth both the Vishnukundin and Vakataka families.

Indrabhattarakavarman, the third chief of the line is said to have vanquished his dayadas, some of whom were driven to the far off regions whereas others were destroyed completely, he is further said to have won victories in chaturdanta-battles, and made himself supreme lord of the empire with the help of his own right-hand. He was a parama-mahesvara, paramabhattaraka and a parama-brahmanya and a dharma vijayi, who acquired vast religious merit by establishing ghatikas as ordained by law.

The last king Vikramendra bhattarakavarman is said to have been the crest-jewel of the Vishnukundin dynasty who was possessed of the great requisite qualities for the protection of the whole earth. He was a Mahimahendra the great Indra of the earth.

5. Ramathirtham copper plates:

Place: Vizianagaram district

Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin, his son Vikramendra; his son Indravarman (donor), 27th regnal year.

The first king Maharaja Madhavavarman is said to have been the ^edvout worshipper of the god Sripervathasvami, that

his feet were covered by the rays of the gems set in the diadems of the samantas of the whole earth who bowed before him in submission. The second king Raja Vikramendravarman is said to have been the crest-jewel of the exalted line of Vishnukundin kings.

6. Ipur Copper-plate grant I:

Place: Tenali taluk, Guntur district.

Govindavarman; his son Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin (donor) 37th regnal year; his son prince Manchyanathattaraka.

It is stated that Maharaja Sri Govindavarman was a devout worshipper of the god Sriparvathasvami. He is said to have made the gift of innumerable cows, large quantities of gold and much land evidently to gods and brahmins and all the samantas or the subordinate chiefs are said to have bowed down to him in submission and that the orders of his son and successor Sri Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman were obeyed by the kings of all the countries; that he was the possessor of the strength of bala, naya, and vinaya, of all the samantas whom he conquered by means of force and diplomacy; that he was the delighter of the hearts of the youthful ladies in the palace of Trivaranagar; that he performed the Agnishtoma sacrifice; that he was born of hiranyagarbha, and that he washed off the sins of the world by the avbhrta-snanas after performing a series of eleven Asvamedha sacrifices. This king, it is further stated, granted in the 37th regnal year, while he lay encamped in the victorious skandhavara (army headquarters) at Kudavada the village of Vilembali in Guddavadi vishaya to

the brahmin Agnisarman of Vākṣa gotra for the prosperity of his family. The executor of the grant was Manchyana-bhattaraka, the dear son of the king.

7. Ipur Copper-plate II:

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin; his son Devavarman, his son Sri Madhavavarman.

Of these three kings, Devavarman, the second in the line is mentioned without titles. The first king Sri Madhavavarman, is said to have washed away the evil of the world by means of his 'avabhṛta' after the performance of eleven asvamedha sacrifices; besides he is also said to have performed one thousand Agnishtoma sacrifices. His feet are said to have been illumined by the rays of gems set in diadems of innumerable samantas. The official designation, Maharaja of the third, Madhavavarman is lost due to damage in the inscription. He is said to be a devout worshipper of the God, Sri Parvathaswami. He is said to possess naya, vinaya and satva, and, is the lord of Malaya and Trikuta.

The inscription registers the gift of a village to two brahmins Agnisarman and Indra sarman by the king. The gift is said to have been made at Amarapura in the 47th year of his reign.

8. The Pulomburu plates:

Place, East Godavari district

Sri Vikramendra varman; his son Govindavarman; his son Maharaja Madhavavarman, the asvamedhin(donor), 48th regnal year.

It is stated that Vikramendravarman was the worshipper of the god Sriparvathaswami; and that he subdued a multitude

of the Samanta chiefs; that Govindavarman won victories in many battles and had the title 'Vikramasraya', and that Madhavavarman, the donor of the present record was Dasasata-sakala dharanitala narapati (ruler of the entire Dasasatadharanitala or ten hundred countries) was fond of sporting with young ladies in the mansions of Trivaranagara. (Avesita vividha divya Trivarangara bhavana gata paramayuvati jana viharana rata) was the offspring of the golden womb (hiranyagarbha prasuta) that he washed off the evils of the world by ceremonial bath after performing eleven vasvamedha sacrifices; that he was the protector of the learned, the twice born, the teachers, the aged and the ascetics; that he was the sun shining on the kings of the earth; that he was a parama-brahmanya, that he meditated on the feet of his parents; and that he was known as Janasraya Maharaja. It is further stated that in his 48th regnal year he crossed the Godavari to conquer the eastern quarter (pragdigvijaya).

9. The Khanapur plates:

Place: Satara district, Maharashtra

The first plate of the inscription is lost. The second plate mentions Maharaja Madhavavarman who was a sarvabhauma (emperor) and who performed the paundarika, bahusuvarna, ekadasa asvamedha sacrifices. He had the title of chaturvarnya, chaturasrama dharma-karmasetu.

10. Velpuru Inscription:

Place: Sathanapalli taluk, Guntur District.

A sanskrit inscription in archaic characters belonging to a Vishnukundin king named Madhavavarman has been found on a marble pillar near the entrance of the Ramalingaswami temple at Velpuru in Sattanapalli taluk of the Guntur district. This is a fragmentary record which mentions the Vishnukundin and the Pallava families. The broken pieces refer to a skandhavaraha (military encampment) where Madhavavarman and his son Vikramendra were camping. The inscription is dated in the 37th regnal year of the king Madhavavarman.

THE NAME OF THE DYNASTIES

The name Vishnukundin is used variously in the inscriptions to denote their gotra as well as their family.

Tummalagudem copper plate grant I:

Ist plate - II side - 3rd line

Vishnukundeenam

III plate - II side - 2nd and 3rd line

Vishnukundee

Kula vamsyai

IV plate - I side - 3rd line

Srīe Vishnukundeenam

Tummalagudem copper plate grant II

I plate - II side - 3rd line

Vishnukundeenam

II plate - II side - 7th line

Vishnukundi kula

Chikkulla copper plates

I plate - 2nd line

Vishnukundi nam

Tundi copper plate grant

I plate - II side - 1st line

Vishnukundinam

II plate - II side - 1st and 2nd line

Vishnukundi Vakataka Vamsa

dvayalamkruta

III plate - I side 1st and 2nd line

Vishnukundi

Kulatilakasya

IV plate - I side - 1st line

Sree Vishnukundyanvaya

Ramathirtham copper plates:

I plate - II side - 3rd line

Sree Vishnukundiparthivo

Ipur copper plate grant I:

II plate - I side - 3rd line

Vishnu (Kundinam)

III plate - I side - 1st line

Vishnuku(ndyadhiraja . . .)

Ipur copper plate grant II:

I plate - II side - 1st line

Vishnukundinam

The Pulomburu plates:

I plate - II side - 1st line

Vishnuku(ndinoh)

Velpuru stone inscription:

I side - 1st and 2nd line

Vishnukundi

(GO) Trotprabhavasya

Thus the dynastic name occurs not less than sixteen times in the epigraphs of the family.

One recent writer ~~P.~~ S. Sankaranarayanan observed that in all most all the known records of the family where the name of this royal house occurs outside the compounds, including the two sets of Tummalagudem copper plates, the name of the dynasty is spelt only as Vishnukundinam which denotes the i-ending of the name; and that the respective editors of those records have corrected the reading, into 'ondinam' with n-ending evidently to fall in line with the "very incorrect" text of the Chikkulla plates. He therefore suggests to spell the name only as Vishnukundi and not Vishnukundin, as has been usually done.¹¹

The same scholar discussed at length in order to decide the correct spelling of the name of the dynasty and asserted that it would be logical to spell the name of the dynasty as Vishnukundi and not as Vishnukundin as has been hitherto done by scholars.¹²

It is further argued that 'Vishnukundinam' of our records means of the Vishnukundis' as in the case of Pallavanam, Vakatakanam, etc., that the descendants of the kings Raghu, Gupta, Vakataka, Pallava etc., here respectively known as the Raghus, Guptas, Vakatakas, Pallavas etc., and that these names have a grammatical sanction.¹³

"Though the epigraphical texts are often full of irregular and wrong forms, and it would be improper to presume an irregularity in Vishnukundi, occurring sixteen times, merely because the available form is against the theory of some authors course".¹⁴ observes Dr. Sankaranarayanan.

The compound "Vishnukundin" belongs to "Druta" class. Druta is defined as letter "n" which fades away when not required.¹⁵

Philology and phonetic laws clearly tell us that due to the speedy pronunciation of words the sounds that are not required are normally dropped. For example, when the compound word "man-like" is pronounced, the sound "ke" is omitted and changes into one word "manly".¹⁶ Similarly the two words "can not" becomes "can't". More stress falls on the first word and lesser on the second word. Such changes occur only in the colloquial languages.

The usage of the words like "Vishnukundins" in the epigraphs cannot be decided grammatically but can only be explained by studying the words following comparative and historical methods.

The kings of the dynasty were the rulers of the Andhra country where Telugu language was predominantly spoken. It is an admitted fact that the Telugu comes from the Dravidian languages. It is but natural that the influence of their spoken language finds place wittingly or unwittingly in the inscriptions also. Thus it is quite possible that the dynastic name with druta 'n' in the end might have been

omitted and written as "Vishnukundeenam, Vishnukundee-Kula, Vishnukundi-kula, Vishnukundinam, Vishnukundi-Vakataka vamsa, Vishnukundyanvaya, Vishnukundi Gotratprabhavasya etc., Further the word Vishnukundi appears to be used in singular form, and in its plural form it is necessary to add letter 'n' before suffixing the 'pratyaya "lu" to make it "Vishnukundi-nulu", on the other hand to call them as "Vishnukundilu" is untenable for the simple reason that the formation of the compound itself is not according to the principles and characteristics of phonology.¹⁷ It is difficult, to pronounce the syllable "lu" which ends with vowel "U" immediately after the syllable "kundi" ending with vowel 'i". Further with the influence of the vowel 'u' the sound 'i' also becomes 'u' and thus it should be pronounced as Vishnukundulu which is not literally correct. Therefore for the convenience of pronunciation, a gliding letter "nu" (druta) must necessarily be added before the "lu" pratyaya. And the English form of the word Vishnukundinulu becomes Vishnukundins.

In this connection, Dr. V.V. Mirashi observes that Vishnukundin would be the correct form of the name. His observation goes as follows: "Till now all scholars, including Sankaranarayanan, have taken the name of the Royal family as Vishnukundin, but now he has suggested that the correct name of the family is Vishnukundi. The name is spelt in both the ways in the records discovered till now. For instance, the Chikkulla plates read Vishnukundinam in line 2 (see E.I. IV p.195). Elsewhere, the form is Vishnukundinam

(See Epi^{grapha} Andhrica II, pl. 111, line 3, pl.v line 32, and Pl. VI, line 3.) If the royal family name was derived from Vishnukunda as suggested by K~~il~~horn Vishnukundin would be the correct form of the name,. As the same has been in vogue till now, it has been used in the present monograph¹⁸.

Thus, the logical conclusion put forth by ~~Dr.~~ S. Sankaranarayanan to spell the name of the dynasty as "Vishnukundis" has no clarity, and justification. The previous scholars like ~~Dr.~~ Hultzsch, Sewell, G.J.Dubreuil, K.V.Laxmana Rao, ~~Dr.~~ D.C.Sircar, ~~Dr.~~ K.Gopalachari, ~~Dr.~~ N. Venkataramanayya etc., did not err in ^{using} calling the name of the dynasty as Vishnukundins or Vishnukundinulu.

Origin:-

In the Velpuru epigraph of Madhavavarman II, his father Govindavarman I is stated to be an offspring of the Vishnukundin gotra.

" Vishnukundi-

(go) tratprabhavasya "

(face A - lines -2)¹⁹

In the Tundi grant of Vikramendravarman II, his grand-father Vikramendra I is spoken as an ornament of both Vishnukundi and the Vakataka families, his father Indrabhattaraka and himself as the crescent jewel and the gem adorning the crown respectively of the Vishnukundin family.

" Vishnukundi - va

kataka Vamsadvayalamkrita

(Second plate second side - 1st and 2nd line)

" Sri Vishnukundyanvaya

Makuta Chudamani,

(fourth plate first side first line)²⁸

From these evidences scholars like Dr.N.Venkataramanayya opined that the name Vishnukundin is used as a common appellation of their gotra and family.²¹

Opinion is also divided about the original habitat of Vishnukundins. Nine copper plate charters of the dynasty and the solitary stone inscription at Velpuru are silent on the subject.

Scholars are divided into two groups, some contending that they were outsiders who came to Telugu country along with some invaders and established themselves there as its rulers, and others upholding that they were the indigeneous inhabitants of this region who rose to power and fame by their own efforts.

G.J.D. Dubreuil expounded the foreign origin theory.²² His theory is mainly based on the relationship between Vakatakas ^{and} Vishnukundins and also a story related in the 'sthalamahatmya' of the famous temple Sri Sailam or Sriparvatha, that the princess Chandravati daughter of the Gupta king Chandragupta conceived a passion for the God of the Srisaila hill began offering every day a garland of Jasmine flowers to him and that this Chandravati was none else than the Vakataka princess married to Madhavavarman I, the Vishnukundin king.

This theory was refuted by Dr.N.Venkataramanayya stating that this was a bold attempt to convert legend into history.

He opined that the Vishnukundins were probably a local family inhabiting the lower Krishna valley.²³ His intention is more to emphasize that they were the inhabitants of lower Krishna valley preferably Guntur district.

B.V.Krishnarao argued that the Vishnukundins were the natives of Vinukonda, gaining support from their title "Sriparvathaswami padanudhyata".²⁴ It is argued that the Vishnukundin is a sanskritisation of Vinukonda which must have been their original home.

~~Prof.~~ Kielhorn suggested that Vinukonda might have been the capital of the dynasty. The kings of the dynasty were described as Sri-parvateyas. ~~Prof.~~ Kielhorn identified Sriparvata with the modern Srisaillam in the Kurnool district.²⁵ ~~Dr.~~ S.Sankaranarayanan²⁶ suggested that the Vishnukundins must have claimed a connection with some stock of the Chutus and that their original home was Srisaillam only basing on the following facts.

"At the outset it may be pointed out that Tummalagudem set II describes the kings of the dynasty as SriparvatiyaS meaning the "illustrious (kings) of the parvata (i.e. Sri-parvata). This parvata or Sriparvatha must be the same hill whose god the Vishnukundins worshipped. ~~Prof.~~ Kielhorn was perfectly right when he identified that hill with the modern Srisaillam in the Kurnool district famous for the Mallikarjuna temple. Secondly, a Vishnukundi king was referred to as Andhrapati by his Maukhari rival. These epithets viz.,

Sri-parvataya and Andhrapati indicate a distinct possibility of the Vishnukundis claiming a connection with the Sriparvatiya Andhras who are included in the puranic list of successors of the Satavahanas i.e. the Andhras. There are reasons to believe that the above Sriparvatiya Andhras of the puranas were identical with the Chutu Satakarnis. Therefore it may be concluded that the Vishnukundis must have claimed a connection with some stock of the Chutus and that their original home was the Srisaillam only. In this context it may be noted that the names of the Pithapuram chief, Mahendragiri and the Salankayana ruler Hastivarman, though ruling over the present Andhra area, were appended not with the title Andhra or Andhrapati but only with the adjective Paisthapuraka and Vaingeyaka in the inscription of Samudragupta. But at the same time the Vishnukundi is referred to as Andhradhipati by the Maukhari Isanavarman. This may also go to show that, the Vishnukundis were connected ethnically with the Sriparvatiya Andhras of the puranic list*.

*Vishnukundi of our record, Vinhukada (i.e. Vishnukuda) of the Banavasi and Malavalli inscriptions and Vishnurudra of the Abhira record probably belonged to one ethnical group that perhaps included the clans like Chutukula, Sivakula²⁷.

The above suggestion of the Chutu-Vishnukundi connection seems to get further support from the symbol of the seals and coins of the Vishnukundins. For example, the central figure on the seal of the Ipur set I, the earliest of the available

seals of the dynasty, is exactly what we find above the figure of horse on some of the coins found in Anantapur district. The same symbol is found on the Chutu coins also. It may also be remembered that the same symbol is invariably found along with the representation of the lion in all the coins attributed to the Vishnukundis. Therefore, it is very likely that the Vishnukundis inherited or copied this symbol from their kinsmen, the Chutus.²⁸

The origin of the dynasty is shrouded in mystery as observed by Dr. S. Sankaranarayanan in the beginning of Chapter II of his book.²⁹ But at the same time it is not fair to make the problem more mysterious and obscure.

First let us see how far we are correct in deciding the origin of the dynasty basing on the two epithets viz., Sriparvateya, and Andhrapati.

Scholars held divergent views on location of Sriparvatha. Some believe that the Vishnukundins were the natives of Vinukonda, the headquarters of the taluk of the same name in Guntur district of the Andhra Pradesh. This is said to gain support from their title Sri parvathaswami padanudhyata, which is taken to connote their devotion to God Mallikarjuna of Srisailem not far from Vinukonda.³⁰

Dr. N. Venkataramanayya³¹ argued that it is doubtful whether Sri-parvathaswami in the title 'Sri-parvathaswami-padanudhyata' refers to the God Mallikarjuna of Srisailem, for in the first place, there is no evidence to show that there existed at Srisailem a shrine dedicated to Mallikarjuna or

for to that matter any other deity at such an early date. Secondly, Sri-parvatha is mentioned in the Ikshvaku inscriptions of the 3rd 4th centuries A.D., as the ancient name of Nagarjunakonda now in the Guntur district. This is also believed to be the Aparasaila of Hiuen Tsang, a famous Buddhist centure of international repute in the early centuries of the Christian era. Nagarjunakonda, that is the ancient Sripurvata, was also a great centre of Hindu worship at the time. The existence of several temples dedicated to Kartikeya, brought to light by the spade of ^{the} Archaeologist^s at Nagarjunakonda, shows that the worship of the war-God Kumaraswamy or simply swami was also popular in ancient Sripurvata and that it is not unlikely that Sripurvataswami to whose worship Vishnukundins were devoted was to God Siva or what is more probable Kartikeya of Vijayapuri (Nagarjunakonda).

This conclusion was evidently drawn from the fact that Sripurvatha was mentioned in many of the Ikshvaku inscriptions found at Nagarjunakonda and even Ikshvakus were known otherwise as Sripurvathⁱyas. He feels that because Govindavarman I was a Buddhist and his queen, paramabhattacharika Mahadevi established a Mahavihara at Indrapura, the Sripurvathaswami must be none else than Lord Buddha.

Dr. V.V.Krishnasastri, argues that the Sripurvathaswami cannot be Lord Buddha as we know that the Vishnukundin kings from Madhavavarman II onwards were staunch Saivites who called themselves as paramamaheswaras. If it was Kartikeya as suggested by Dr. N.Venkataramanayya, he may be nearer to the truth. But it is very difficult to identify any stupa, Mahavihara, or

even a single sculptured slab either at Amaravathi or Nagarjunakonda belonging to Vishnukundin period.⁵²

Dr. K.R. Subrahmanian³³ arrives at irresistible conclusion that po-lo-yu described by Fa-hian and Po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li mentioned by Hieun-Tsang, were parvata in Dhanyakataka in the vicinity of which was the ancient capital of Dhanyakataka. He opines that the presumption is strong that Hiuen Tsang confuses places and kingdoms, and his distances are not reliable.

Dr. Subrahmanian argues thus:-

"An inscription found on the site of Nagarjunakonda calls the place Sriparvata. The Buddhists must have called this sacred spot parvata in imitation of the Hindu parvata which is but 50 miles from here, as the Crow flies. The Buddhist parvata figures prominently in Buddhist scriptures. Thus the 'Manjusri Mula Tantra says, "Sri parvate Mahasaila Dakshinapatha samjnike Sri Dhanyakatake Chaitye Jinadhatur dhare-bhuvi".

According to Taranatha, Nagarjuna lived here in his old age. Hiuen Tsang, in describing 'po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li, 'refers' to a conversation between Nagarjuna and Deva. The former exhorts the latter to take over the torch of learning as 'he was now old and infirm'. Thus it is probable that Hiuen Tsang po-lo-mo-lo-ki-li is parvata.

Fa-hian describes from hearsay a great Buddhist centre in the Deccan which he calls po-lo-yu. The term literally means in Chinese apigeon (Parvata). The name parvata, Fa-hian must have noted down by mistake as parvata and

subsequently he must have translated paravata into Chinese as po-lo-yu. We should read his account of po-lo-yu very carefully. "There is a great rock out of which are excavated many buildings. The monastery has five storeys. There are 1500 cells all told. Water flows naturally round the establishment from perennial springs. The land all round is uncultivated and uninhabited. Foreign pilgrims go to this place". The last point seems to be confirmed by an inscription at the place Nagarjunakonda. The country all round is even today barren. There is a great rock and extensive ruins are found on the site. Hundreds of monks and nuns must have lived here once.

Hiuen Tsang's⁺ description of po-lo-yu-kili is exactly like Fa-hian's of po-lo-yu. The peak towers above the rest. There are five storeys. There were 1000 priests. Streamlets of water flow down the hill and round the establishment.

Hiuen-Tsang's Travels and the life tells us that the capital of Dhanyakataka was full of hills, woods and streams. The description on page 221 of Beal's translation volume II reminds us of Nagarjunakonda. "To the east of the capital bordering on a monument is a convent called purvasaila. To the west of the city bearing against a mountain is a convent called Avarasaila. These were built by a former king to do honour to Buddha. He hollowed the valley, made a road, opened the mountain crags, constructed pavilions and long galleries wide chambers supported the heights and connected the caverns . . . 1,000 monks used to dwell here

Thus, the irresistible conclusion is that po-lo-yu and po-lo-mo-lo-kili were ^{the} parvata in Dhanyakataka in the vicinity which was the ancient capital of Dhanyakataka."

From the foregoing arguments it can be very easily ruled out that Sriparvathaswamy is Lord Mallikarjunaswami of Srisaillam. Sriparvatha literally means a 'sacred mountain', and any deity that is installed on a hill or a mountain may be called as Sri-parvathaswamy. One question may be asked now who is this Sriparvathaswamy that Vishnukundin kings worshipped as a family deity? Where is this Sriparvatha? We shall find logical answers in the next chapters.

Let us now examine the significance of the epithet. "Andhrapati" referred by the Maukhari Isanavarman.

Indrabhattarakavarman came into conflict with Isanavarman, the Maukhari king of the north, an ancient family who had been feudatories of the Guptas, ruling over the south Bihar and U.P. Isanavarman was the first ^aMukhari king to assume the imperial title Maharajadhiraja. The Haraha inscription³⁴ of the time of that monarch dated Vikrama Samvat 611 (554 A.D.) credits him with a victory, in a war with Andhradhipati described as the master of thousands of rutting elephants.

Jitv=Andhradhipatim sahasra-ganita

tredha-ksharad-Varanam

Verse 13

Haraha (Barbanki district)

Here, "Andhra-adhipati" is a tatpurusha compound which means the Lord or ruler of Andhra country. This inscription is

evidently about two hundred years later to the inscription of Samudragupta.

Indrabhattaraka gave his daughter Indrabhattarika mahadevi in marriage to Sarvavarman, son of Isanavarman, and concluded peace with him³⁵. Indrabhattaraka ruled over the kingdom for twenty seven years. He was praised as a powerful warrior and a great monarch. He is said to be the victor in innumerable Chaturdanta battles; his feet are said to have been illuminated by the lustre in the diadems of the monarchs of the four oceans prostrating before him as a mark of their submission, and innumerable samantas are said to have carried out his behests in unquestioning obedience; He bore the title of "Satyasraya"³⁶⁴². There is no wonder this king was referred as Andhradhipathi by his Maukhari, rival in Harsha inscription.

As regards the Allahabad pillar inscription, Samudragupta was a 'samrat', who very easily defeated the Pithapuram chief, Mahendragiri, and the vengi ruler of Salankayana dynasty, (Hastivarman) in course of his south Indian expedition. Though Hastivarman bore the title of Maharaja, the extent of his kingdom was limited only to ^{the} east coast, between ^{the} Godavari and ~~the~~ Krishna rivers, while Samudragupta is said to have "uprooted the kings of Aryavarta, he is said to have followed a policy of "Capture and liberation". Further, he came into conflict with many kings during his south Indian expeditions, of whom Mahendragiri of Pithapuram and Salankayana Hastivarman were one among them. Thus, there is reason to refer these two kings as

Paisthapuraka and Vaingeyaka, in the inscription of Samudra-
this may also go to show that the Vishnukundins were connected
gupta. As such, the argument that ethnically with the
Sriparvathiya Andhras has no weight.

Dr. Sankaranarayanan also argued that the symbols etc.
on the coins of Vishukundins and Chutu-Satakarni's are alike
and that the Vishnukundins inherited or copied the symbol
from their kingmen, the Chutus.

This argument is also not tenable as that of the other
two points for the simple reason that the origin or appella-
tions of a dynasty cannot be decided on the evidence of
coins and the symbols they bear.

A close and comparative study of the major dynasties such
as Vakatakas that ruled over Deccan after the fall of Satava-
hanas till the rise of Early Chalukyas throw some light on the
origin of the Vishnukundin dynasty.

The following similarities show the kinship of
Vakatakas and Vishnukundins.

1. Vindhyasakti I, the founder of the Vakataka dynasty was
a brahman of Vishnuvridha gotra which closely resembles
Vishnukundin gotra of the Vishnukundin rulers.
2. Vikramendrabbattaraka I, the father of the Indrabhattaraka
was the son of Vakataka Mahadevi and an ornament both of
the Vishnukundin and Vakataka royal families.
3. Some scholars believe that "Trivaranagara bhavanaparama
yuvatijana - Viharana - rata" associated with the name
Madhavavarman IV (Janasraya) in the inscriptions shows that
he was a native of Trivaranagara, identified with modern
Tewar on the banks of the Narmada which was in all probabi-

lity the headquarters of the appanage granted to his family.³⁶

4. The title Maharaja figure in the records of Vakataka king pravarasena II seem to be purely formal and it does not seem that they enjoyed any considerable ruling power. The first two kings in the Vishnukundin dynasty i.e. Mahendrarvarman, the Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman I were having titles without any ^uling power.
5. The Vakataka kingdom was fairly extensive but its rulers were content with the mere title of Maharaja, only one amongst them, Paravarasena I who was undoubtedly a great conqueror, took the title Samrat, probably because he had performed the vajapeya sacrifice. His successors reverted to the old and simple title maharaja.³⁷
6. The Vakataka rulers were all of Brahmanical faith but they liberally contributed to the development of the Buddhist establishments within their kingdom. Rudrasena I became a Saivite and all the subsequent Vakataka kings were devotees of Siva with the exception of Rudrasena II who became a Vaishnavite under the influence of his wife Prabhavatigupta and her father Chandragupta II.

All the Vishnukundins with the exception of Govindavarman I, his queen Paramabhattarika Mahadevi and Vikramendrabhattaraka I, were Saivas ^{by} ~~in~~ faith. Govindavarman I who is said to be the founder of the Vishnukundin monarchy, his chief queen Paramabhattarika Mahadevi and Vikramendrabhattaraka I among the later members of the royal family adored the Buddha, built stupas and viharas. The subsequent rulers of the

family were all staunch followers of Vedic dharma. The Sriparvathaswami was the lord of their family deity. Indrabhattaraka and his son Vikramendra II were Paramamaheswaras.

7. A number of books were written in sanskrit on various subjects during the Vakataka period. The puranas were remodelled, the Yagnavalkya, Narada, and Katyayana smritis were written and the Vyasabhashya sankhyakarika, and the Lankavatharasutra were composed. Bhasa, Sudraka, Visakhadatta, and Kalidasa flourished during the Vakataka period. King Pravarasena II ^{probably} wrote the prakrit poem Sethubandha and it was ^{allegedly} revised by the poet Kalidasa himself.

The Vishnukundins too ^{patronized} loved learning and some of the kings were distinguished men of learning. Madhavavarman IV who had the title Janasraya, is believed to be the author of Janasraya chando-vichitti, a treatise on sanskrit prosody. Almost all the copper plate grants of the Vishnukundins were composed in sanskrit. Probably sanskrit might have been the court language of the Vakatakas and the Vishnukundins.

8. The majority of the Ajanta and Ellora caves were excavated in the Vakataka period. The cult of temples was gradually becoming more and more popular. The Vishnukundins seems to have inherited the artistic traditions of ^{the} Vakatakas.

G.J. Dubreuil has shown that the cave temples at Undavalli and Mogalrajapuram on the banks of the Krishna are Vishnukundin excavations.³⁸

9. Ramagiriswamy, the deity at Ramtek about thirteen kilometres from Nagpur was the family deity of Vakatakas . . .

Most of the temples of the Vakataka period appear to have been dedicated to Ramalingeswara.

In all probability Ramalingeswaraswamy at Keesaragutta, about ~~45~~ kilometres from Hyderabad ^{was} ~~must be~~ the family deity of Vishnukundins.³⁹

10. The Vakatakas were orthodox brahmins but followed the Kshatriya profession of kingship.

The Vishnukundins bore the glory of Brahmakshtras, a statement which clearly indicates that they were originally the brahmins who having adopted the profession of arms became kshatriyas.

11. Unlike Salankayanas, Brihatphalayanans, and Anandagotrins Vishnukundins rose to power somewhere in lower Deccan north of Krishna distinctly in the present Telangana region and then extended their kingdom to eastern parts of Andhra country as well as penetrating ^{the region} towards north of ^{the} Godavari. About 300 A.D. the Vakataka king Pravarasena I, who is credited with one title "Samrat" extended his kingdom into far south including the northern districts of the former Hyderabad State.⁴⁰

There are no evidences to show that the Vakatakas extended their territory beyond ^{the} Krishna. We know that the Krishna valley was under the suzerainty of Ikshvakus till they were subjugated by the Pallavas. It is therefore quite probable that the Vishnukundins rose to power in the present Telangana region which was not under the sway of ~~the~~ any royal family and this must have had happened under the influence of the Vakatakas.

12. The fortunes of the Vishnukundins were bound up with the fortunes of the dynasties of the north and their sphere of action lay in the north, ~~It is~~ with the Vakatakas, the Maukharis and the kings of the Kalinga.⁴¹

The foregoing facts show that the Vishnukundins were closely related to ^{the} Vakatakas even much earlier than the matrimonial relations of Madhavavarman I with the Vakataka princes, and that they inherited the traditions of ^{the} Vakatakas in all respects. It is also quite likely that the Vishnukundins originally belonged to a royal family of central India, gradually came down and settled in the Andhra country as ordinary feudatory chiefs and subsequently rose to power by their prowess by reducing to subjection their fellow feudatories and annexing their lands.

Extent of the kingdom:-

The exact area that was under their sway at the zenith of the Vishnukundin dynasty is not known. However it is not a difficult task to find out the extent of the Vishnukundin kingdom from the available epigraphic, numismatic, and archaeological evidences.

Epigraphical sources:-

The inscriptions of the Vishnukundin rulers were not issued from one place. There is no indication in the Govindavarman's Tummalagudem set of copper plate grant from where it was issued. Tummalagudem plates II of Vikramendravarman II were issued from Indrapura, Ipur plates of Madhavavarman son of Devavarman were issued from Amarapura. Madhavavarman II's Ipur plates from Puranisangama, Chikkulla plates of Vikramendravarman II were

issued from Lendulura, Tundi plates were granted from Tundi.

The find spot of Pulomburu plates is in the East Godavari district.

The Velpuru pillar inscription is in Sattenapalli taluk of Guntur district.

Indrapura, ^{and} Amarapura are identified as modern Amaravathi on the southern banks of Krishna. Guddavadi vishaya is modern Godavari district. Puranisamgama may be identified with the modern Sangam in the Palakonda taluk of the Srikakulam district. Lendulura is modern Denduluru near Eluru in West Godavari district. Tundi grama is modern Tuni in East Godavari district. The find spot of Tummalagudem copper plates is in Ramannapet taluk of Nalgonda district, Ipur is a village in Tenali taluk of Guntur district.

Now let us study some more details available in the inscriptions.

The statements in the Tummalagudem plates I and II that Govindavarman I acquired his kingdom by the might of his arms and that he made himself master of the territories of the other feudatories by his heroism, bravery and prowess show that he established his kingdom by reducing to subjection his fellow feudatories and annexing their lands. He is said to have built in all provinces of Dakshinapatha viharas adorned with sculptures. He claims to have conquered^{ed} his fellow samantas and became as a consequence the Kaustubha pendant in the necklace (hara) of the kings ruling both on the eastern and the western sides of the Sriparvata.

Though the extent of the country under his rule cannot be definitely estimated, it must have been large, as it is stated to have comprised of several vishayas.

It is stated in the Tummalagudem plates II that by his prowess Madhavavarman II seized the royalty of the kings of other dynasties and that his authority extended over the region surrounded by the eastern southern and western seas and the river Reva (Narmada) in the north. It is also stated that his kingdom was bounded by the western sea and the river Reva in the north. From Velpuru inscription we learn that he led his army southward across the river Krishna with a view to conquer the Guntur region. It speaks of his presence in military camp at Velpuru probably during the course of a war with the Pallavas, Ipur plates I show that the king was camping at Skandhavara (army headquarters) at Kudevada in Guddadi^{va} vishaya. It is quite probable that he waged war against the kings ruling over the Pisthapura region and penetrated as far as Srikakulam area.

Madhavavarman II extended his kingdom upto Narmada, exterminated the Salankayana dynasty at Vengi, subjugated the rulers of Pisthapura and Srikakulam and thus extended his kingdom to the eastern sea. He vanquished the Pallavas and annexed northern parts of Guntur district to his kingdom.

Ipur plates II of Madhavavarman III grand son of Madhavavarman II tells us that he bore the title of Trikuta-Malayadhipathi and that his capital was Amarapura. Regarding the identity of Trikota and Malaya there is considerable difference of opinion among scholars. Some believe that Trikota is identical with Kotappakonda in the Guntur district whereas others identify it with a peak of the Sahyadri near Nasik in Maharashtra.⁴² The latter appears to be more reasonable. Malaya is the ancient

name of the Eastern Ghats, this region is spoken of in the early inscriptions as Malayamandalam in Vengi.⁴³ We have to understand by the title Trikuta-Malayadhipathi that Madhavavarman III was the ruler of the territory extending from the Trikuta in the west to Malaya in the east.

In Pulomburu plates Madhavavarman IV is described as "Dasasata-Sakala-Dharanitalanarapathi" and this land has been correctly identified with Vengi.⁴⁴ (Vengi-grama-sahasram) It is evident that he made himself master of the whole of Vengi that is, the country between the deltas of the rivers Krishna and Godavari.

Numismatic and Archaeological evidences:-

Vishnukundin coins were found in Tanguturu in the Elhongir taluk of Nalgonda district, Telkunta in the Sultanabad taluk of the Karimnagar district, Dharanikota near Amaravati in Guntur district.⁴⁵

A Vishnukundin coin was found in Prakash excavations⁴⁶ on the banks of the river Tapati. This coin ^{displaying} within a circle with a pellets round, lion with tail downward to right on the obverse and within a broad circle of radiating lines, vase on a stand between the tripod lamp stands or standards is identified by ~~Dr.~~ V.V. Krishnasastri as Vishnukundin coin.⁴⁷

Coins of the Vishnukundins first came to light in Maharashtra, in the course of archaeological excavations at Brahmapuri⁴⁸, on the western outskirts of the city of Kolhapur on the right bank of the Panchaganga river. A couple of coins were recovered in the excavations at Nevasa⁴⁹ in the Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra. One Vishnukundin coin of the usual

type was reported from the surface of a low mound at Nagar⁵⁰ in the Gondia taluk of the Bhandara district. Thereafter three Vishnukundin coins were unearthed in Paunar⁵¹ in the Wardha district while digging foundations for a house, and two coins in the course of archaeological excavations. Another Vishnukundin coin was found near Nagpur.⁵² Thus we may come to an assumption that a large part of Maharashtra including the Satara-Kolhapur, Ahmadnagar, Nasik and Vidarbha regions was once held by the Vishnukundins, though this distribution of coins find spots need not be taken as conclusive evidence of the extent of the kingdom.

Vishnukundin coins were also found in the course of archaeological excavations conducted at Yeleswaram in Nalgonda district. Nelkondapalli in Khammam district, and Keesaragutta in Rangareddy district.

The find spots of these coins are of great significance. The coins found in the Nalgonda, the Karimnagar, the Khammam and the Hyderabad district in Prakash on the banks of Tapati, and in four to five districts in Maharashtra indicate the extension of Vishnukundin territory into western Deccan as well as northern parts of Godavary valley, To the south of the river Krishna in the present Nandyal taluk, Kurnool District. We come across several structures popularly known as Navanandisvara temples. The Mahanandisvara temple at Mahanandi, and Sivanandisvara temple at Kadamalakalva and a ruined temple at Panyam, all in the Nandyala taluk of Kurnool district are curvilinear structures exhibiting more or less the same architectural features. In Kadamalakalva, the temple is dedicated

to the god Sivanandisvara. Besides the main shrine, there are about five minor shrines in stepped pyramid type and about forty monolithic votive shrines of nearly one metre high. On one of these monolithic shrines there is a lable incised in two lines which reads as;

1. Satyasraya bhattarara
2. Konranchakrasumanantu

The first half of the record clearly mentions the name of Satyasraya bhat^tara, that is Pulakesin of the Chalukyan family. This enables us to fix the upper limit of the date of this temple to the time of Pulakesin I (A.D.540) who is contemporary to Vishnukundin king Indrabhattarakavarma who bore the title Satyasraya.

Indrabhattaraka came into conflict with the Chalukyas, Pulakesin I who was a contemporary of Indrabhattaraka appears to have risen against the Vishnukundin and asserted his independence. The title Satyasraya, bore by Pulakesin I belonged originally to the Vishnukundin Indrabhattaraka. It was customary in ancient South India for the victorious ^{Princes}warriors to appropriate to themselves the titles and the insignia of their vanquished enemies. In pursuance of this practice it is not unreasonable to suppose that Pulakesin I defeated Indrabhattaraka in the neighbourhood of Kadamalakalva and assumed as a mark of his victory and Vishnukundin ^{king's} ~~monarchs'~~ title Satyasraya.⁵³

It is also interesting to notice in the Satyavolu temple twin horned Saiva figures as dwarapalas before the main grabha-griha, which feature reminds us the Mogalrajapuram cave images

of the same type ascribed to the Vishnukundin period. Satyavolu group of shrines contain an apsidal or gajaprishta structure, a feature datable to pre-Chalukya period, quite probably to Vishnukundin kings.

TRIVARANAGARA

Epithets:

We come across with an epithet Trivaranagara bhavana gata-yuvati-jana-hridaya-nandana, which is attributed to Madhavavarman IV in set I of the Ipur copper plates.

In Pulomburu plates also he is described as Trivarnagara ghavanagata - parama -yuvati-jana - Viharanaratih.

Some scholars identified "Trivaranagara" appearing in the above epithets, with Tewar⁵⁴ in Madhya Pradesh, and some with the city of Trivara⁵⁵ of South Kosala. One recent scholar tried to identify this with "Tiruvur"⁵⁶ town in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh.

~~Professor~~ ^{N. Sankar} K.A. Sastry,⁵⁷ rightly interpreted the expression Trivaranagara as "three good cities and concluded that there were three flourishing cities in the kingdom of Vishnukundins. The set of Ipuru copper plate inscriptions registers the gift made at Amarapura by Maharaja Madhavavarman. Tummala-gudem plates II refers that Vikramendrabhattarakavarman led an expedition against a Pallava king named Simha, and after scoring a victory over him in a battle, returned first to Sakrapura (Indrapura) and made a gift of the village of Irenderu to the ~~to the~~ Chaturdas-arya-vara-Bhikshu sangha residing in the mahavihara built by paramabhatarika. It is believed that

Madhavavarman II must have overthrown the last Salankayana ruler and annexed the latter's territory of Vengi thus extending the eastern boundary of the Vishnukundin kingdom to the Bay of Bengal. When Madhavavarman IV succeeded Vikramendra II, the territory under his rule was limited to a small area around the capital. He was obliged to fight hard to bring under his rule even Vengi which must have formed the core of the Vishnukundin dominions. In Ipur plates II it is stated that in his 37th regnal year he was camping, during the course of an expedition, at Kudavada. It is likely that the enemy was the Durjaya chief Prithvi Maharaja. Madhavavarman seems to have been successful ultimately in establishing his authority over the whole of Vengi, for he proudly asserts in the Pulomburu grant, dated in his 48th regnal year that he was the lord of the whole of Dasa satasakala dharanitala. It is evident that Madhavavarman made himself master of the whole of Vengi. Earlier we have seen that modern Tewar on the banks of the Narmada was in all probability the headquarters of the appanage granted to the family of Madhavavarman IV. It may be accepted beyond doubt that there existed three flourishing cities during the rule of Madhavavarman-IV, that he was the delighter of the hearts of youthful ladies in the places of those three cities and that he was fond of sporting with young ladies in the mansions of the three good cities. In all probability Vengi and Tewar are the two among the three cities. The third flourishing city must be the original capital of the Vishnukundins in the Telangana region and it is none other than Kesaragutta ~~50~~ in the present Rangareddi district.

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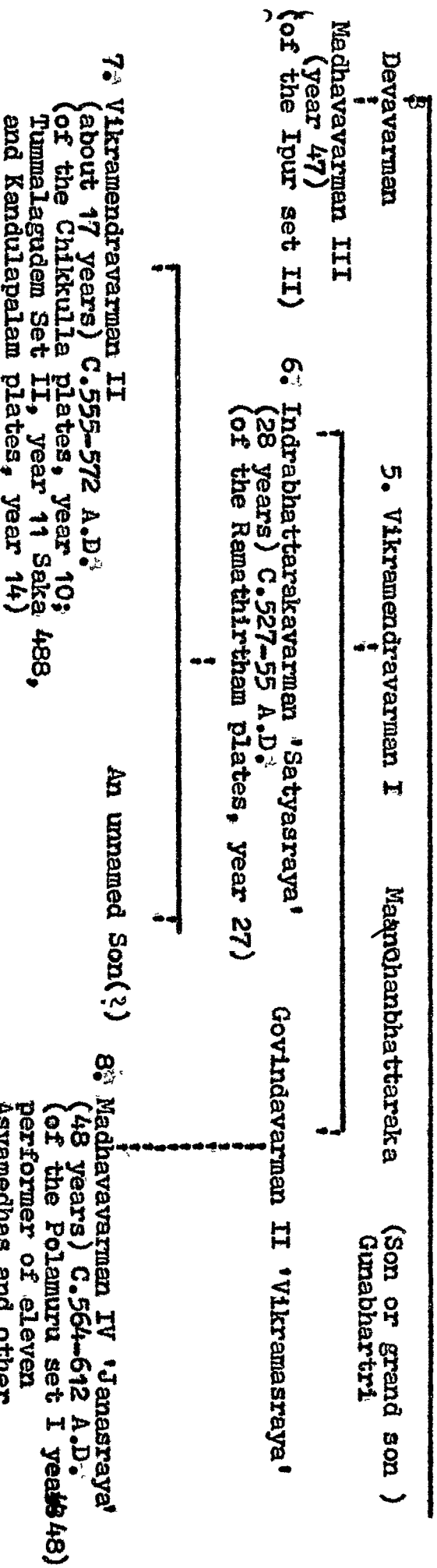
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(ii) GENEALOGY AND CHRONOLOGY

The genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundin dynasty have become a subject of controversy among the scholars. The view points of scholars like D.C.Sircar¹, K.A.^{ee}Nilakanta Sastry², K.V.Laxmana Rao³, H.Krishnasastry⁴ are well known. The discovery of the Tummalagudem copper-plates has led to the re-examination of the subject by many scholars viz., Dr. M.Rama Rao⁵, Ajay Mitra Shastri,⁶ V.V.Mirashi⁷, S. Sankaranarayanan⁸ and N.Venkataramanayya.⁹

After an exhaustive and comparative study of the various theories on the subject Dr. S.Sankaranarayanan has propounded his theory, setting aside all other theories regarding the genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundins. On the basis of the reasons given by him and on the known regnal years of the kings of the family, the genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundins has been tabulated as follows.¹⁰

1. Indravarmen-C.375-400 A.D.
2. Madhavavarman-1 C. 400-22 A.D.
3. Govindavarman 1 (40 years) C.422-62 A.D. (Of the Tummalagudem set I dated 37th year)
4. Madhavavarman (40 years) C.462-502 A.D. (Of the Velipuru inscription, year 35 the Ipur set I, year 37, and the Khanapur plates, no year) (performer of eleven Asvamedhas and other sacrifices)



The above scheme is stated to be based on the facts supplied by the old and new source materials, is free from unnecessary assumptions and minimises the gap between the dates of the two sets of the Pulomburu plates and that the total period allotted to the eight ruling monarchs is only 225 years in average about 28 years for each monarch and it is not unreasonable. It is further argued that the reign period (564-612 A.D.) allotted to Madhavavarman-Janasraya finds support from the work Janasraya Chandovichiti of the period, for it quotes from the poet Bharavi, who has been generally assigned to about 550 A.D.

Even after the discovery of the two sets of Tummalagudem plates some new theories have been advanced by the Scholars.

Dr.V.V.Mirashi¹¹ felt that the view of Dr.S.Sankaranarayanan in placing the grant of Govindavarman before that of Vikramendrabhattarakas lands him in some difficulties as shown below.

Before proceeding to discuss this problem, it is necessary to state the genealogies in the two charters and give some other details mentioned in them. They are as follows:

I - The Grant of Vikramendrabhattarakas - The genealogy in this grant is as follows:

Govindavarman
|
Madhavavarman(married a Vakataka princess and
| performed eleven Asvamedhas and
Vikramendra(I) several other sacrifices)
|
Indrabhattarakavarman
|
Vikramendrabhattarakavarman(II)(11th regnal year and Saka 488)

The purpose of the charter was to register the donation by Vikramendrabbhattaraka, of the village Irundera to the Paramabhattacharika-Mahavihara constructed by the Paramabhattacharika-Mahadevi, the queen of Govindaraja, who is evidently identical with Govindavarman mentioned as the progenitor of the family. She is highly glorified in the charter and described as the mother of Madhavaraja (evidently identical with Madhavavarman mentioned above) as born in the illustrious family of King Prithvimula.

II - The grant of Govindavarman - The genealogy in this grant is given as follows:

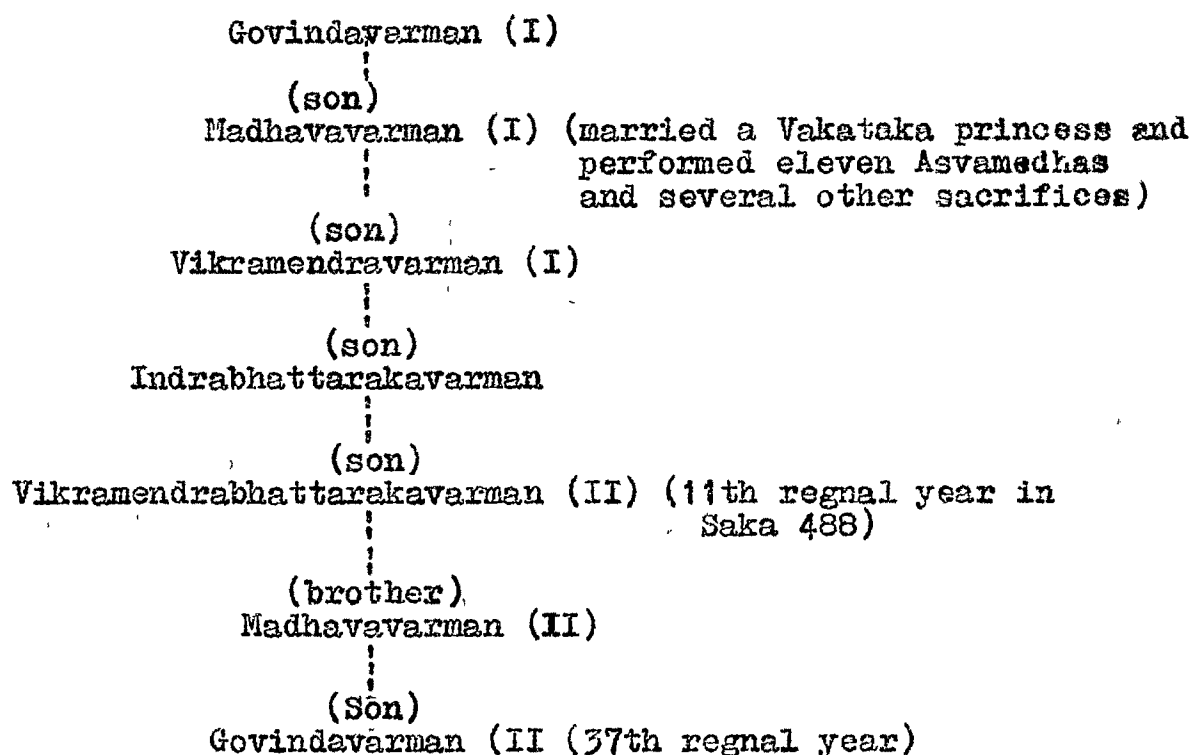
Indravarmān
↓
Madhavavarman
↓
Govindavarman (37th regnal year)

The purpose of this charter was to register the donation, by Govindavarman, of two villages, Bramadala and Penakapura, to the vihara of the Parama-mahadevi for the alleviation of the miseries of his parents(?) and other beings and the acquisition of religious merit by his chief Queen (Agra-mahishi) resulting from the supply of the materials of worship (of the Buddha), food, shelter and medicines (to the Bhikshus) and the repairs of the monastery.

Both the grants were evidently made to the same vihara, viz. that known as Paramabhattacharika-mahavihara, which was constructed by the queen of Govindavarman and mother of Madhavavarman, who being held in great veneration, is

referred to as Paramabhattacharika-mahadevi in the first grant and as Parama-mahadevi in the second.

If we scrutinise the two genealogies carefully, we shall find that Madhavavarman of the second grant was the brother and successor of Vikramendrabbhattaraka who made the first grant, since Indrabhattarakavarman of the first grant is plainly identical with Indravarman of the second. The combined genealogy of the two grants would, therefore, be as follows:



This genealogy in no way conflicts with that known so far from Vishnukundin grants. The names of Devavarman and his son Madhavavarman have not been included in it, because they were ruling in Western Maharashtra (as the later king is described in his grant as Trikuta-Malay-adhipati. We have only to add Vikramendra (called Vikramendra in the Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman) in the beginning of this

genealogy, as the father of Govindavarman (I). Till now, Vikramendra II was the last known king of this branch. The newly discovered Tummalagudem plates have carried the genealogy two reigns further.

Sankaranarayanan does not agree with this order of succession. He places the grant of Govindavarman before that of Vikramendrabbattarakka chronologically and states the succession of the Vishnukundins as follows:

Indravarman
|
Madhavavarman I
|
Govindavarman
|
Madhavavarman II (performer of 11 Asvamedhas)
|
Vikramendravarman I
|
Indrabhattarakavarman
|
Vikramendrabbattarakavarman II

This genealogy is in conflict with the following known from the Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman (the performer of all Asvamedhas).

Vikramahendra (i.e. Vikramendra)
|
Govindavarman
|
Madhavavarman (performer of 11 Asvamedhas)

It will be noticed that the grandfather of Madhavavarman (who performed eleven Asvamedhas) was Vikramendra according to the aforementioned Pulomburu plates, while that of the homonymous king (who also performed the same number of Asvamedhas) was Madhavavarman according to the genealogy suggested by Sankaranarayanan. This clearly shows that the

genealogy is incorrect. In defence of this genealogy, however, he says that the two Madhavavarmanas, though described in identical terms as performers of eleven Asvamedhas, are different from each other. Such a view is hard to accept. The Asvamedha was no ordinary sacrifice. In the ancient history of India there is only one king who is credited with the performance of as ~~as~~ eleven Asvamedhas. He is also known to have married a Vakataka princess. He is the son of Govindavarman and grandson of Vikramendravarman. If any other king had laid claim to this distinction, he would have been immediately found out and publicly ridiculed. It is strange that Sankaranarayanan believes in the performance of as many as eleven Asvamedhas by more than one king of the same name and in the same period. In defence of his ~~strange~~ view, he quotes the Vedantic saying - na hi drishte anupapannam nama (No question of impossibility can arise when we actually observe a truth on the testimony of evidence). But what is the evidence? Is it not self contradictory? Cannot the available evidence be interpreted satisfactorily in any other way? We have shown above that it can be interpreted quite satisfactorily if we take Govindavarman's grant as later in date than that of Vikramendrabhattarakavarman.

But, one may ask "Apart from the identical description of the two Madhavavarmanas, is there any evidence that the chronological relation of the two grants assumed by Sankaranarayanan is incorrect?" We proceed to state it below.

The Tummalagudem plates of Govindavarman record the grant of the two villages made by the king.

The passage (in the grant) is rather loosely worded, but as it stands, it tells us that the villages were granted by the king for the alleviation of the sufferings from poverty of his own parents(!) and all beings, and for the undiminished religious merit of his chief queen (ⁿAgramahishi) by the supply of lamps, incense, sandal paste, flowers (for the worship of the Buddha), food, drink, beds (and) medicines (to the Bhikshus) and the repairs of dilapidated and damaged portions of the vihara of the Parama-mahadevi. The Agramahishi mentioned in the grant is clearly different from the Parama-mahadevi, whose vihara received the gift.

This vihara is identical with the Paramabhattacharika-mahavihara mentioned in the other grant of Vikramendrabhattacharika-varman. It was constructed by the queen of Govindavarman, the founder of the Vishnukundin kingdom. She was greatly venerated. She is called Parama-Bhattacharika-mahadevi in that grant and is described as the mother of the illustrious Madhavavarman (I) who married a Vakataka princess and performed eleven Asvamedhas and several other sacrifices. It is sure that she is referred to as Parama-mahadevi in the other grant. She is not identical with the Agramahishi of Govindavarman. The latter is not likely to refer to his own queen as Parama-mahadevi. He is evidently referring to the venerable queen of his ancestor Govindavarman, the founder of the Vishnukundin kingdom.

Govindavarman, who issued the Tummalagudem plates is different from his namesake, who was the father of the great king Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and other numerous sacrifices. He flourished later than Vikramendrabhattaraka who issued the other set of Tummalagudem plates. He was the latter's nephew, his grand-father Indravarman being identical with the latter's father Indrabhattarakavarman mentioned in his plates. His plates are, therefore later than those of Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman.

This conclusion is also supported by the palaeographical evidence of the two sets of plates. Sankaranarayanan also is conscious of this, but he has tried to explain it away as follows: "Set I (i.e. the grant of Govindavarman) was probably prepared during the time of Vikramendravarman II on the basis of an original charter that had probably fallen in disuse." This is a gratuitous assumption, for which there is no basis. The real cause of the developed characters is that the grant was made and incised in a later age.

The same can be said of his explanation of the words 'Sthitir-esha sthapita' which occur at the end of the charter. Sthiti here means the same as Vyavastha which occurs in some grants¹² in the sense of settlements. It does not mean 'the restoration of previous grant' as Sankaranarayanan supposes.

This problem can be examined from another point of view also. The Vishnukundin king Madhavavarman I is known to have married a Vakataka princess, for his son Vikramendravarman is described as 'one whose birth is adorned by the two royal

families of the Vishnukundins and the Vakatakas¹³ or as 'the son of a Vakataka Mahadevi.'¹⁴ She is generally taken to ~~the~~ have been a daughter or some near relative of the Vakataka king Harisena. The latter ruled from circa A.D.475 to A.D.500¹⁵ It is now generally agreed that Harisena, who is credited with a victory in Andhra, probably defeated the contemporary Salankayana king and gave his kingdom to the Vishnukundin Govindavarman. He also formed a matrimonial alliance with him by giving a Vakataka princess in marriage to his son Madhavavarman. This conjecture is based on what we know of the history of the contemporary ruling families.

The Salankayanas were ruling over the country between the Godavari and the Krishna with their capital at Vengi.¹⁶ The capital of the Vishnukundins is not mentioned in their grants, but it too was probably at Vengi, for the decisive battle in which they suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Early Chalukya king Pulakesin II was fought near the Kunala lake, which lies only a few miles from Vengi. Thereafter, the Eastern Chalukyas also made the same city their own capital. So the Salankayanas, the Vishnukundins and the Eastern Chalukyas ruled in succession at Vengi.

Let us next see when the Vishnukundins established themselves at Vengi. We know that Madhavavarman I, the son of Govindavarman, was a junior contemporary of the Vakataka king Harishena, who flourished in A.D.475-500. So he can be referred to the period circa A.D.490-535 as he had a reign of more than forty years." We have a valuable reference in his

Pulomburu plates that there was a lunar eclipse in Phalguna in the fourteenth year of his reign.¹⁷ So that eclipse must have occurred round about A.D.530. The same approximate date is arrived at, from ^{another source} ~~other date~~. We know that the Tummalagudem plates issued in the eleventh regnal year of Vikramendravarman's reign are dated in Saka 488 or A.D.566. Now, the known regnal years of his father Indrabhattarakavarman and grandfather Madhavavarman I are 27 and 40 respectively. The total of these three regnal years comes to (40 plus 27 plus 11 = 78). Deducting this from A.D.566 (when the Tummalagudem plates of Vikramendravarman II were issued), we get A.D.488 as the lower limit for the accession of Madhavavarman I. The exact year of it can be ascertained from the mention of the lunar eclipse in the month of Phalguna in his fourteenth regnal year. We find from Swami Kannij Pillai's Indian Ephemeris¹⁸ that there were lunar eclipse in Phalguna of the three successive years A.D.527, 528 and 529, but there was none in the previous period of A.D.501 to 526, and in the succeeding period of A.D.530 to 545. So the lunar eclipse of the fourteenth year of Madhavavarman I's reign must be one of those in A.D.527, 528, 529. We have fixed A.D. 488 as the lower limit of Madhavavarman I's accession. So the lower limit for the lunar eclipse of his fourteenth regnal year would be 488 plus 40 = A.D.528. As there was a lunar eclipse in Phalguna of A.D.527 it must be the one mentioned in Madhavavarman's Pulomburu plates of the 40th regnal year.

Madhavavarman I thus came to the throne probably in A.D.487. He was preceded by Govindavarman I. The latter was a contemporary of the Vakataka king Harisena (A.D.475-500), who may have given the kingdom to him after overthrowing the last Salankayana king ⁱⁿ his invasion of Andhra in circa A.D.480.

How far does this conclusion agree with the known dates of the Salankayana kings? D.C.Sircar has suggested A.D.430-450 for the reign of the last known Salankayana king Skandavarman.¹⁹ This is only approximate as the reign-periods of the different Salankayana kings are not definitely known. The last king may well have continued to reign till A.D.480, when he may have been defeated and deposed by Vakataka Harisena.

According to the genealogy of the Vishnukundins suggested by Sankaranarayanan, Madhavavarman I was preceded by three kings viz., Indravarman, Madhavavarman and Govindavarman. It is impossible to squeeze these three reigns in the period between 475 (the accession of Harisena) and A.D.487 (the date of the accession of Madhavavarman I fixed above). This also proves the incorrectness of the proposed genealogy.

Let us next see what bearing this date (A.D.489) fixed for the accession of Madhavavarman I has on the history of the Deccan. Madhavavarman I performed as many as eleven Asvamedhas, and extended his rule over a large part of the Deccan including Vidarbha and Southern Maharashtra. One of his inscriptions has been found in the Satara district.²⁰ Northern Maharashtra was under the rule of the ^aTrikutakas.²¹ Madhavavarman gave southern Maharashtra to his grandson Madhavavarman (II), son of Devavarman²². It seems that soon

after the death of Madhavavarman I in circa A.D.530, there was a political revolution in the Deccan. The Kalachuri king Krishnaraja's father, who was ruling from Mahishmati, seems to have extended his rule to Vidarbha, Konkan and Maharashtra. The date of this revolution can be fixed as A.D.533-34 on the evidence of the Matwan plates of the Abhira year 284 as shown by us elsewhere.²³

If we place the three kings mentioned in the Tummalagudem plates of Govindavarman in the beginning of the Vishnukundin age, the history of Andhra after Saka 488 (A.D.566) would be completely dark. On the other hand, if we suppose that they flourished at the end of that age, it would throw important light on the political history of that country during fifty years (A.D.566 to A.D.616) before the invasion of Pulakesin II in A.D.616. Vikramendravarman ruled for atleast three years after issuing the Tummalagudem plates; for his Tundigrana grant is dated in the fourteenth regnal year.²⁴ His grandson Govindavarman II ruled for atleast 37 years. The remaining ten years (50 minus 40) must be the reign period of Madhavavarman II, the father of Govindavarman II. Pulakesin II seems to have conquered Andhra in A.D.616 and thereafter issued his Muruturu grant in the eighth year of his reign corresponding to A.D.617-18.²⁵ All the known dates are thus satisfactorily explained if the two sets of Tummalagudem plates are chronologically related as shown here.

The queen of Govindavarman I was born in the feudatory family of Prithvimula.²⁶ This king was probably ruling over

Pishtapura. I have shown elsewhere²⁷ that he was an ancestor of the homonymous king who was a contemporary of the Vishnukundin king Indrabhattarakavarman as stated in the Godavari plates. A prince of this family named Mularaja is mentioned at the end of the Tummalagudem plates of Vikramendravarman as the restorer of the royal fortune of the Vishnukundin family by his diplomacy and valour.²⁸ These two families thus connected politically and matrimonially continued to rule at Vengi and Pishtapura till the conquest of the country by Pulakesin II. A later king of this family named Prithviraja is known from two grants.²⁹

Finally, the Pallava king Simhavarman, after defeating whom the Vishnukundin king Vikramendravarman II made the grant dated Saka 488, has been identified by Rama Rao with the second king of that name who was ruling in circa A.D. 550-575.³⁰

In an Appendix to Chapter II on the History of the Vishnukundins in Vol. III of the History and Culture of the Indian People, (pp.223 f.) K.A.Nilakanta Sastri has proposed a different chronology and genealogy of the Vishnukundins, which also must be examined in this connection. We have taken king Madhavavarman who granted the Ipur³¹ and Pulomburu³² plates are identical with the homonymous ruler mentioned as the grandfather of Indrarman in the Ramatirtham plates³³ and as the great-grandfather of Vikramendravarman in the Chikkulla plates³⁴ on the ground that in all these four charters he is described in identical terms viz., that he performed eleven Asvamedhas and a thousand other Vedic

sacrifices. Sastri, however, differentiates between them on the ground that in the former two charters he is also described as Hiranya-garbha-prasuta and as Trivaranagara bhavana-gata-yuvati-hridaya-nandana, but these epithets do not occur in the later two grants. This is a strange argument. Does Sastri expect that all epithets of a king should be repeated in all his charters and in those of his descendents? We must utilise all positive evidence. Negative evidence is not always reliable. Sastri's reliance on this negative evidence has vitiated the chronology and genealogy of the Vishnukundins proposed by him.

Sastri's second objection to the chronology and genealogy of the Vishnukundins given in that chapter, which, for the most part, is identical with that fixed in the present article, is as follows.³⁵ "The Pulomburu grant should be placed much nearer the date of the foundation of the Western Chalukya dynasty, as the second ruler is separated from Madhavavarman of the Pulomburu grant by hardly one generation - as is seen from another Pulomburu grant of the fifth year of Chalukya Jayasimha I (ss EI.XXII, pp.20-1, esp. n.3 on p.21). This objection must be examined at some length, especially because we have now fixed a definite date for the accession of Madhavavarman I in the present study.

The Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman I record that when he crossed the Godavari to conquer the eastern region, he donated the village Pulomburu in the Guddavadi vishaya to Sivasarman, the son of Damasarman and grandson of Rudrasarman of the Gautama gotra and Taittiriya saka, on the occasion of

a lunar eclipse which occurred on the full-moon day of Phalguna. Again, the Pulomburu plates³⁶ of the Eastern Chalukya king Jayasimha I, which were discovered along with the above plates of Madhavavarman, record the grant of the same village to Rudrasarman, the son of Sivasarman and grandson of Danasarman of the Gautama gotra and Taittiriya sakha. It seems that Rudrasarman, who is called purva-agraharika (former owner of the donated village) lost possession of the village in troubled times due to the invasion of Pulakesin II. He seems, therefore, to have made representations to Jayasimha I sometime after peace and order had been established in the kingdom and received the agrahara village again by a new charter.

On the evidence of these two charters, Sastri infers that Madhavavarman who granted the Ipur and Pulomburu plates was separated from Jayasimha 'by hardly one generation'. So in his genealogy he places him in circa A.D.556-616, and distinguishes him from king Madhavavarman, the grandfather of Indravarman and great-grandfather of Vikramendravarman, notwithstanding the afore mentioned identical description of both. Let us examine this argument at some length.

The grant of Madhavavarman I recorded in his Pulomburu plates was made to Sivasarman in A.D.527 as determined above. That if the Eastern Chalukya king Jayasimha I was made to his son Rudrasarman in the first regnal year. As Pulakesin II conquered Andhra in circa A.D.616, and his brother Vishnuvardhana had a reign of 18 years, this second Pulomburu grant must have been made in $(616+18+5) = \text{A.D.639}$. There is thus an interval

of 112 years between the two grants. Such long interval between a grant made to a Brahmana and that made to his son is, no doubt, unusual, but not impossible. If we suppose the Sivasarman, who received the grant of Madhavavarman I in A.D.527 was a young man of twenty-five, and Rudrasarman was born to him at the age of fifty (in A.D.552), the latter would be an old man of eighty seven when he received his Pulomburu grant from Jayasimha in A.D.638. This is not impossible. We may quote here the same Vedantic saying in support of it. Na hi Drishte anupapanaam-nama. Here both the dates have been fixed on the reliable evidence of contemporary copper-plate grants. They are not conjectural. So the above supposition regarding the age of Sivasarman and that of his son Rudrasarman at the time of receiving their respective grants is quite plausible.

To sum up, if we interpret the two sets of Tummalagudem plates as shown above, all problems raised by them can be solved satisfactorily.”

The theory of Dr. N.Venkataramanayya and the detailed reasons put forth by him in support of formulating the genealogy and chronology of the dynasty are as follows:

“The Chikkulla and Tundi grants belong to one and the same king; for Vikramendrabhattarakavarman, the donor of these two records, was the son of Indrabhattarakavarman the grandson of Vikramendrabhattarakavarman, the ornament of the two dynasties of the Vishnukundins and the Vakataka, and the great grandson of Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and innumerable other sacrifices. The Tummalagudem plates II also belong to the same monarch; for Vikramendra-

Whattaraka, the donor of this grant like his namesake donors of the other two, was the son of Indrabhattarakavarman, the grandson of Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman who was the son of Vakataka Mahadevi and a great grandson of Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas besides innumerable other sacrifices. In addition to the names of these four generations of kings, the Tummalagudem plates II introduces a fifth king viz., Govindavarman, the father of Madhavavarman, so that we have here five generations of kings instead of the usual four. The Ramatirtham grant also belongs to a king of the family; for Indravarmā (the abridged form of Indrabhattarakavarman), was the son of Vikramendravarman, the ornament of both (Vishnukundins and Vakataka families) and the grandson of Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and Kratu sahasra (thousand sacrifices). It is evident the Vikramendra the donor of the Ramatirtham plates was the father of Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman, the donor of the three inscriptions mentioned above. Taken together they describe a genealogy of five generations of Vishnukundin kings.

Maharaja Sri Govindavarman
 |
 Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman
 |
 Maharaja Sri Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman I
 |
 Sri Indrabhattarakavarman
 |
 Sri Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman II

This genealogy is unquestionable, and has to be accepted by all. We have now to see whether and how the genealogies described in the remaining records are connected with this.

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman I
:
Sri Devavarman
:
Sri Madhavavarman II

	Maharaja Sri Govindavarman	
	↓	
	Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman I.	
	↓	
↓	-----	↓
Devavarman		Vikramendravarman
↓		↓
Sri Madhavavarman II		Indrabhattarakavarman

Maharaja Sri Govindavarman
:
Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman
:
Yuvaraja Manohayana bhattaraka

Maharaja Govindavarman and Maharaja Madhavavarman of inscription may appear at first sight to be identical with the

kings of the same names in the genealogy formulated above. Their mutual relationship as father and son and the attribution of the titles - Pranata - Sakala - Samanta and go-hiranyabhu - pradata of the former and agnishtoma-sahasra-yaji, ekadas - asvamedh avabhrit - avadhuta - jagat - kalmashah of the later - lend colour to it; but the title Trivaranagara bhavana-gata-yuvatihri dayaranjana of Madhavavarman of this record is not associated with Madhavavarman of this record is not associated with Madhavavarman of the Ramathirtham, Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates seems to indicate that Madhavavarman of Ipur I plates is not identical with Madhavavarman of the four records mentioned above but a different monarch. The genealogy of this inscription appears to be the same as that described in the Pulomburu plates. The latter refer to three generations of Vishnukundin kings.

Sri Vikramahendravarmā
!
Govindavarman
!
Madhavavarman

Vikramahendravarmā, the name of the first king of this line, has been taken by scholars to be a scribal error for Vikramendravarmā. This may have been so. He is said to have been a devout worshipper of the feet of Sriparvata-svami; to whom the circle of the samanta - kings bowed in submission. The second king, Govindavarman was a victor in several battles; his feet, it is stated, were illuminated by the light of the gems set in the crowns of the enemy kings; and he bore the title of Vikramasraya. Vikramahendra's son, Maharaja Madhavavarman was like Madhavavarman of the Ramathirtham, Chikkulla

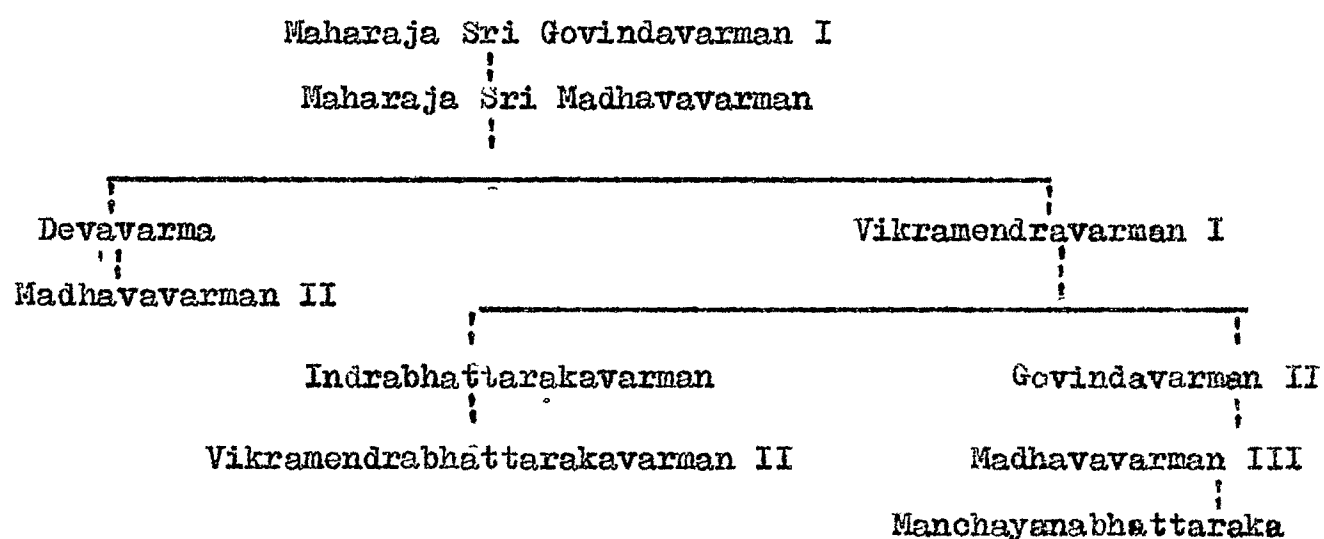
Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates as well as Madhavavarman of the Ppur I plates, was the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and other sacrifices; but unlike the former and like the latter, he was Trivarnagara bhavana gata yuvati jana vihara rata (or hridaya - randana) and hiranyagarbha - prasuta - that is, he took delight in sporting with (or in the alternative caused delight to the hearts of) the young damsels of Trivarnagara and took his birth from the womb of the golden (cow),. It is reasonable to suppose that Madhavavarmans of the Ipur I and Pulomburu plates are one and the same person and that the genealogical lists given therein are identical. Combining the pedigrees of these two records, we get the following:-

Maharaja Vikram(ah)endravarman
|
Maharaja Govindavarman
|
Maharaja Madhavavarman
|
Manchyana bhattaraka

We shall next proceed to find whether this line of rulers has any connection with the Vishnukundin monarchs of the four inscriptions mentioned above; and if so where in the genealogy described therein they have to be accommodated. Now, Vikramendravarman, the first name in the Ipuru I -cum-Pulomburu list offers a clue. It may be remembered that this name occurs twice in the list furnished by the four (Chikkulla, Tundi, Ramatirtham, and Tummalagudem II) inscriptions mentioned above. Of the two Vikramendravarman of this list, the first was the son of Madhavavarman, the performer of eleven Asvamedhas and other sacrifices. He is referred to in the inscriptions as the son of Vakatakamahadevi, ubhayavamsalam-

karabhuta, and Vishnukundin - Vakataka - ubhayavamsadvaya-
lamkara-janma (born as an adornment both of the Vishnukundi and
Vakataka families); and the other was the grandson of the
above, son of his son Indrabhattarakavarman. The Vikramendra
(Vikramahendra)varman of the Ipur-I-cum-Pulomburu list must be
identical with one of these two. Some have identified him
with the latter; but this cannot be accepted, as it militates
against the known historical facts. If Vikramendra (Vikrama-
hendra) of Pulomburu plates is identified with his namesake,
the donor of the Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates,
his son Govindavarman, and grandson Madhavavarman must have
ruled the kingdom one after the other. We know from the
Tummalagudem II and Tundi plates that he ruled atleast upto
A.D.570. Allotting a period of 25 years of rule to
Govindavarman, and adding to it the 48 years rule of his son
Madhavavarman, we get A.D.643 as the latest known year of the
latter. This is impossible; for in the first place, the
Chalukyan conquest took place, as revealed by the recently
discovered Maraturu grant of Pulakesin II, in A.D.616-17.³⁷
After the Chalukyan conquest, the Vishnukundins could not
have been ruling in Vengi or anywhere in the coastal Andhra
country. Therefore, it is not possible to accept that the
Pulomburu line of kings succeeded Vikramendra bhattaraka, the
donor of the Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem II plates.
There is reason to believe that they were contemporaneous with
this Vikramendrabbattaraka and his predecessors. In the
first place the characters of the Pulomburu plates resemble

those of Tummalagudem plates. Secondly, Madhavavarman and his father Govindavarman of the former, bear titles ending with suffix asraya like Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman and his father Indrabhattaraka. It seems, therefore, reasonable to think that Vikramendra of the Pulomburu plates is identical with Vikramendra, the son of Madhavavarman and Vakataka Mahadevi and that he was the common ancestor of Vikramendrabbhattaraka (the donor of Chikkulla, Tundi and Tummalagudem records), and Madhavavarman of the Pulomburu grant. Assuming the correctness of this line of thought, the Vishnukundin genealogy may be drawn up as follows:-



There is yet one more record Tummalagudem plates to consider before we complete the Vishnukundin genealogy.

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graph TD
    A[Maharajendravarman] --> B[Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman]
    B --> C[Maharaja Sri Govindavarman.]
  
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Though the similarity of the characters of this record to those of the Tummalagudem II plates seem to indicate that

they belong to the same period, there are strong grounds to believe that the former is much anterior to the latter. Govindavarman, the donor of Tummalagudem I set granted the village of Penkaparu to the monastery of the Chaturdas-aryabandha-bhikshu-samgha built by his chief queen Parama Mahadevi at Indranagara.

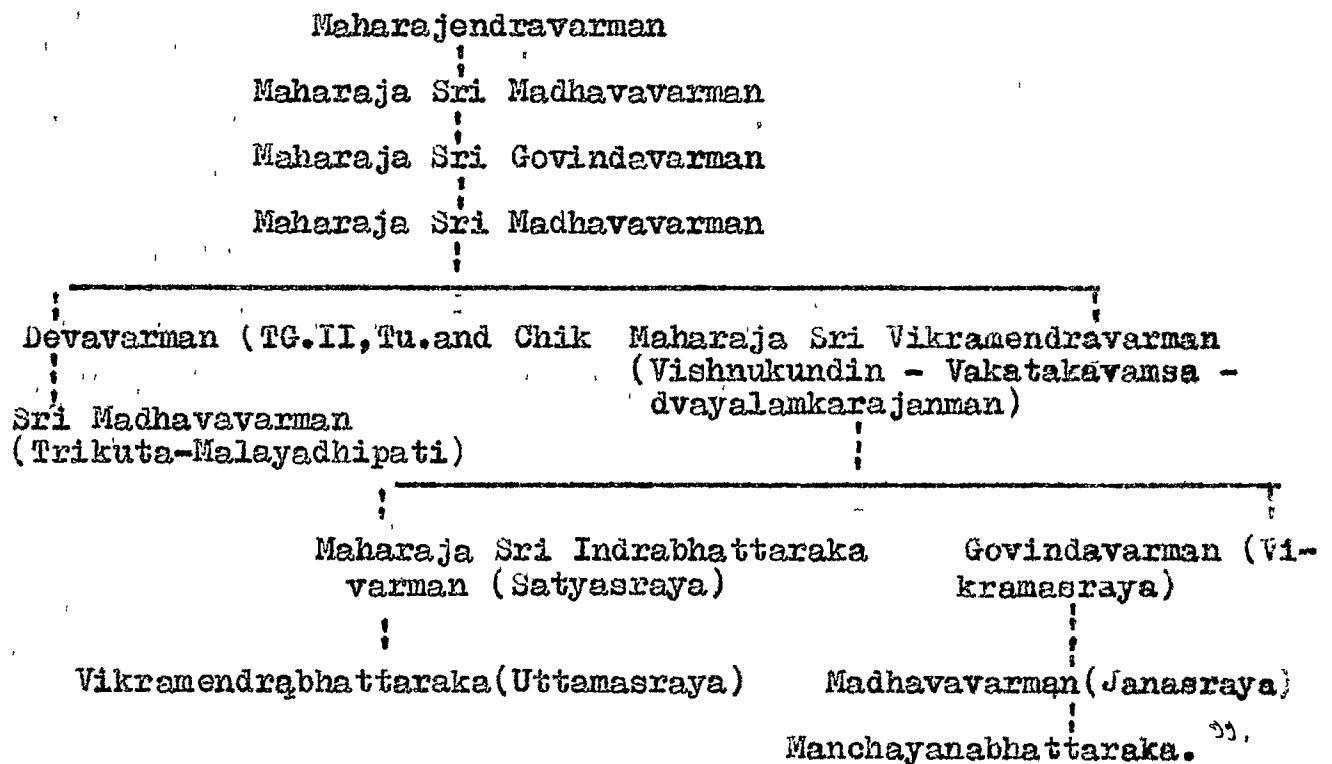
Svasya-agra - mahishya Parama-Mahadevya - viharasyadipa - dhupa - gandha - pushpa - dhvaja pana - bhojana - sayanasana - guna - bhaishajya - khanda - sphutitasirana - kusala - mul - anupach - ched - artthandva - la - Penkaparo - namadheyao-udaka - dana - purvakammatisrishtah.

Vikramendrabbhattarakavarman, the donor of the Tummalagudem II set granted the village of Iranderu to the same monastery built at Indrapura by Parambhattaraka Mahadevi, the queen of Govindavarman, the grandfather of his grandfather and the mother of Madhavavarman, the father of his grandfather for the Chatur-das-aryavara-bhikshu-samgha.

Sri Govinda- rajasya murtimatis sriya - Praty - vishyakrita - monorathaya Parama- Bhattarika Mahadevya Sri mad - Indrapuram - uchcheir - alakartukama yevapratishtha-pitesrimatu Paramabhattarikaviha ri chaturdas -arya - vara bhikshu - samgha paribhogaya Iranderu - namagramodattah.

It is evident from these that Govindavarman and his Parama (bhattarika) Mahadevi of these two inscriptions are identical and not two different individuals. The fact that Parama (bhattarika) Mahadevi was the builder of the

vihara at Indranagara (pura) for the monks of the Chatur dasarya - vara - bhikshu - sangha strengthens this identification. Therefore, it may be declared with confidence that the Tummalagudem I set is anterior to the II set. The similarity of the alphabet must have been due to the fact that the former is a later copy in course of time, or to the varied scribal skill as it can often happen for dating decisively on mere palaeographical differences may not always be acceptable. Accepting this to be the correct reading of the facts, it may be asserted that the genealogies in the two records are interconnected, and the kings mentioned in the first set are the ancestors of those in the second. The genealogy of the Vishnukundin kings may be finally set forth as follows:



CHRONOLOGY:

The Vishnukundin chronology had been resting hitherto on the basis of two copper-plate grants (1) Of the Vishnukundin Madhavavarman II Janasrayan and (2) of the E.Chalukya Jayasimha Vallabha I, both from the village of Pulomburu (the present Polamur) in the E. Godavari district A.P. These are referred to, for the sake of convenience, as Pulomburu plates I and II respectively in the course of the following discussion. The former registers the gift of the village of Pulomburu as a sarva-kara-parihara agrahara of Siva Sarman, son of Damasarma and grandson of Rudrasarma of Gautamasa-gotra by Madhavavarman Janasraya, son of Govindavarman and Vikramahendravarma of the Vishnukundin family on the occasion of a lunar eclipse on Phalguna-purnamasya in the 48th year of his rule after crossing the Godavari for the conquest of the eastern region.³⁸ The latter records the renewal of the grant of the same agrahara to its former owner Rudra Sarman, son of Siva Sarman, grandson of Dama Sarman of Gautamasa-gotra by Jayasimhavallabha, son of Kubja-Vishnuvardhana, younger brother of Satyasraya Pulakesi Vallabha II and grandson of the Chalukya king Kirtivarman II.³⁹ It is evident from these (1) that Siva Sarman who obtained Pulombur as an agrahara from the Vishnukundin Madhavavarman IV Janasraya was the father of Rudra Sarman, who obtained the renewal of the grant of a former agrahara from the E. Chalukya Jayasimhavallabha I; and (2) that Siva

Sarman and his^{son}/Rudra Sarman were the contemporaries of Vishnukundin Madhavavarman IV Janasraya and the E.Chalukya Jayasimhavallabha I respectively. It may be inferred from this that the last two belonged to two successive generations and that the latter might even have been the younger contemporary of the former.

The data furnished by these two records had formed until recently the basis of the Vishnukundin chronology, ~~Sri~~ K.V. Lakshmana Rao⁴⁰ the first writer to formulate the chronology of the Vishnukundin rulers, sets forth the problem as follows: "As the donee of Madhavavarman's inscription was the father of the donee of Jayasimhavallabha's inscription. Madhavavarman must have been a contemporary of Jayasimhavallabha's father Kubja-Vishnuvardhana, the founder of the E.Chalukya kingdom of Vengi and of the former's paternal uncle Pulakesin II, the famous South Indian opponent of Sri Harsha. It is evident from this that Madhavavarman must have flourished about the close of the 6th and commencement of the 7th centuries. A.D. We must now see whether it is possible to ascertain the period of his rule more precisely. We learn from Pulomburu plates I that Madhavavarman made the gift described therein at the time of a lunar eclipse on Phalguna Purnami (11-25-27). Now during the period under consideration, the Moon suffered eclipse on Phalguna Purnami in A.D.575, 593, 594, 612 and 621. The first of these dates (A.D.575) must be rejected as too early to be the 48th regnal year of a king (viz. Madhavavarman) who should have suffered

defeat at the hands either of Kubja Vishnuvardhana or of his elder brother Pulakesin II. Similarly, the last date (A.D.621) must also be rejected as too late, as he (Madhavavarman) was vanquished by Pulakesin II at the beginning of the 7th century, very probably about 610 A.D. We know that Kubja-Vishnuvardhana established his independence about 616 A.D. Of the remaining three dates 593 and 612 must also be rejected, as the lunar eclipse, which occurred when the Sun was above (below) the horizon were not visible in India. Therefore, the only date that satisfied the conditions is A.D.594 (to be more exact 10th February A.D.594), when Madhavavarman issued the charter (i.e. Pulomburu plates I). As the inscription is dated in the 48th regnal year of the king, his reign must have commenced in A.D.564. As Madhavavarman, perhaps the last Vishnukundin king of Vengi, ruled that country before its conquest by Pulakesin II or his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana, he must have ruled for 65 years from 546 to 610 A.D.⁹³

~~Sri~~ Lakshmana Rao next proceeds to reconstruct, on the basis of the ~~recon~~ period of Madhavavarman's rule which he had fixed, the chronology of the Vishnukundin kings as follows:

ARE. C.P.No.12 of		Madhavavarman I (A.D.357-382)
1919-20		Devavarman (A.D.382-407)
		Madhavavarman II (A.D.407-444)
Ramatairtham plates		Vikramendravarman I (A.D.444-469)
Ep.Ind. XII p.133		Indrabhattarakavarman (A.D.469-496)
Chikkulla Plates Ep.		Vikramendravarman II (A.D.496-521)
Ind. IV p.193		

Andhra Parishad (Pulomburu) plates Bharati VII No.8 and VIII pp.302-315

Govindavarman (A.D.521-546)
Madhavavarman III (A.D.546-610)
Manchannabhattaraka (A.D.610-)

Scholars, who discussed the problems of the Vishnukundin genealogy and chronology subsequently, accepted the dates suggested by ~~Sri~~ Lakshmana Rao as the basis of their chronological schemes, though they differed from him about the actual succession of the kings and put forward variant versions of their pedigree. Like him they made the two sets of Pulombur plates the bed-rock of their chronology, and proposed on their basis chronologies which, however, differ from one another. As these like the one put forward by Lakshmana Rao are opposed to facts that have come to light recently, they are not taken into consideration here.

The dates A.D.546 and 594 suggested by ~~Sri~~ Lakshmana Rao for the first and the 48th regnal years respectively of Madhavavarman may be accepted as correct as they are based on the astronomical and chronological data furnished by the Pulomburu Plates I. There is, however, no justification for prolonging the reign of that king until A.D.610. It is not also possible to accept the genealogy and the chronology propounded by him as they are opposed to facts that have come to light in recent years. The Pulomburu plates I and II, no doubt, show that their donees Sivasarman and Rudrasarman were contemporaries of their respective donors Madhavavarman and Jayasimhavallabha; but it does not

necessarily follow from this that like the former the latter also belong to two successive generations and that Kubja-Vishnuvardhana and Pulakesin II, the father and paternal uncle respectively of Jayasimhavallabha were contemporaries of Madhavavarman; and that it was from him that they conquered Vengi in A.D.610. There is reason to believe that the Vishnukundins ceased to exist some time before the Chalukyan conquest which as a matter of fact, took place in A.D.616-17 and not in A.D.610 as assumed by Sri Lakshmana Rao. The recently discovered Maraturu grant of Pulakesin II shows that he invaded Vengi for the first time in his 7th regnal year (A.D.616-17), and that he was accompanied not by his younger brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana as it is generally believed but by the Alupa king of Mangalapura (Mangalore on the West Coast)⁴¹. Kubja Vishnuvardhana was in fact, governing the three Maharashtrakas from Achalapura as the deputy of his brother, at the time.⁴² It is utterly baseless that he should have declared his independence as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao in A.D.617. His association with Vengi began some seven years later in A.D.624 from which, as shown by ^{Somabikshara} Sri M.S. Sarma, he reckoned his regnal years.⁴³ His rule over Vengi lasted for 18 years not from A.D.617 to 633 as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao but from A.D.624 when he was succeeded by Jayasimhavallabha. He revived the old grant of Pulomburu to Rudrasarman in his 5th regnal year, that is in A.D.647. There should have elapsed therefore 53 years between the grant of Pulomburu to Sivasarman by Madhavavarman in his 48th regnal year (A.D.594),

and the regrant of the same village to the former's son Rudrasarman by Jayasimhavallabha in his fifth regnal year (A.D. 647). Reckoning 25 years for a generation, two generations have passed in the interval. It is therefore doubtful whether Rudrasarman was actually a son of Sivasarman, as stated by Sri Lakshmana Rao, and not a later descendant.

The belief that the Vishnukundin rule lasted upto the time of the Chalukyan conquest of Vengi, and Madhavavarman(IV) the donor of the Pulomburu plates I, was the Vishnukundin monarch who suffered defeat at the hands of either Pulakesin II or Kubja Vishnuvardhana and forfeited as a consequence his throne and kingdom is not supported by evidence. The Chalukyan inscriptions, it may be noted, do not even remotely allude to the Vishnukundins. They declare on the contrary, that Kubja Vishnuvardhana, the founder of the E.Chalukya dynasty conquered Vengi from the Durjayas who were then ruling that country. The earliest record to mention this fact is the Katlaparru grant of Guna⁹⁰ Vijayaditya, wherein it is stated that Kubja Vishnuvardhana brother of Satyasraya (Pulakesin II) defeated the Durjayas and seized Vengi.⁴⁴ This is also referred in the inscriptions of some of his successors. The Pandipaka grant of Chalukya Bhima I for instance states that Kubja Vishnuvardhana, ~~the~~ unrivalled in prowess, dislodged the Durjayas from the Andhra-vishaya which was in their possession and conquered and occupied Vengi.⁴⁵ The Kakamanu grant of the same king also declares that Kubja-Vishnuvardhana having driven out at first the Durjayas from Vengi ruled over that

country for eighteen years.⁴⁶ Similarly, the Kandayam plates of Danarnava assert that Kubja Vishnuvardhana took Vengi by force from the Durjayas and ruled over it for eighteen years.⁴⁷ The evidence of these inscriptions make it clear (1) that the Vishnukundin rule did not last, as supposed by ~~Sri~~ Lakshmana Rao and others, until the Chalukyan conquest; (2) that the Chalukyas conquered Vengi not from the Vishnukundins but the Durjayas, and (3) that the Durjayas had been in possession of Vengi for some time before the advent of the Chalukyas having conquered it earlier from the Vishnukundins.

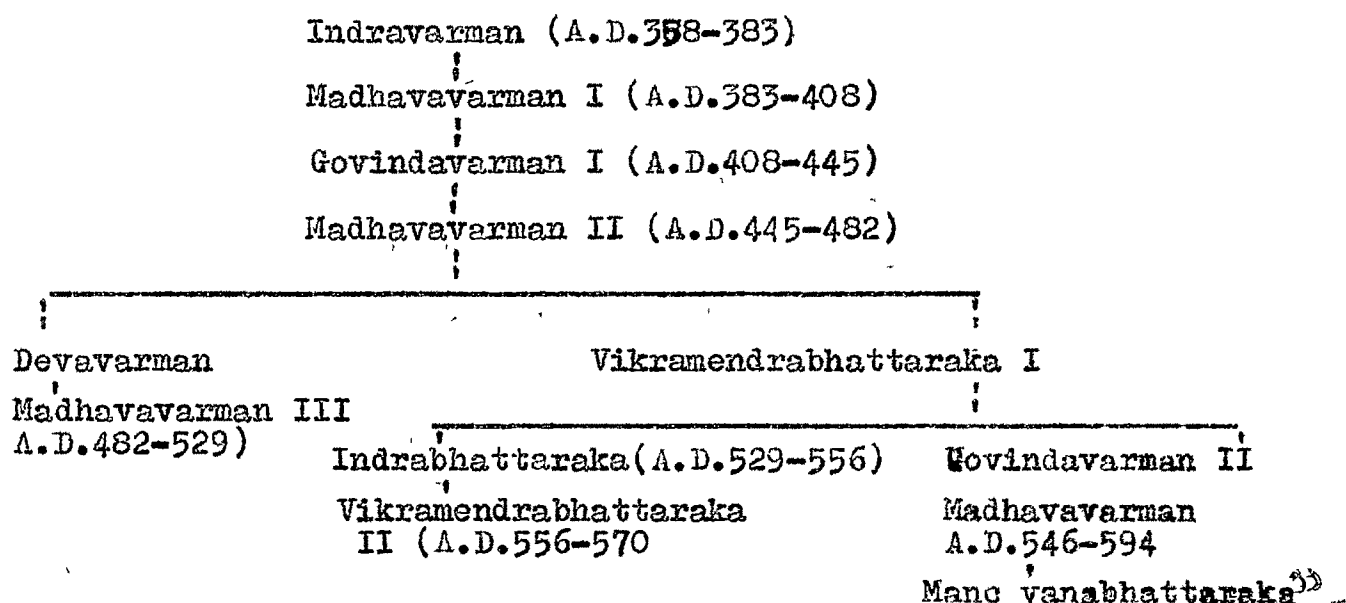
~~Sri~~ B.N.Sastri had placed the scholarly world engaged in historical research under a deep debt of gratitude by his discovery and publication of the two sets of Tummalagudem (Indrapalanagaram) Copper-plates,⁴⁸ which have greatly enriched our knowledge of ancient Andhra history. Of these, the second set which is by far the most important Vishnukundin record both from the chronological and historical points of view, that has come to light so far may be regarded as the sheet anchor of the Vishnukundin chronology. It has given it, by coupling S.488 (A.D.556) with the 11th regnal year year of Vikramendrabhattacharakavarman II, certainly which it had never known before. If, as stated in this inscription the 11th regnal year of Vikramendrabhattacharaka II coincided with Saka 488 (A.D.556), he ruled, as shown by his Tundi grant, for fourteen years, and his rule consequently lasted from A.D.553 to 570. On the basis of these dates and with the regnal years furnished for each king by his

inscriptions, it is possible to formulate a tolerably correct chronology of the Vishnukundin dynasty; but before proceeding to do so a fact which seems to militate against it demands consideration. We have deduced from the Tummala-gedem II and the Tundi grants that Vikramendrabbattarakavarman II ruled from A.D. 555-6 to 570-71. His father Indrabhattarakavarman who preceded him on the throne ruled according to the Ramatirtham plates for 27 years. (1) Deducting 27 years from A.D. 556 when he was succeeded by his son, we get A.D. 529 for the beginning of his reign. We have accepted above the dates A.D. 546-596 calculated by Sri Lakshmana Rao on the basis of the astronomical and chronological data provided by Pulomburu plates I for the reign of Madhavavarman (IV) as correct. This would mean that during the whole of the reign of Vikramendrabbattarakavarman and part of that of his predecessor Madhavavarman (IV) was also ruling simultaneously as the sovereign of the Vishnukundin dominions. This, however, is not as incompatible as it may appear at first sight. Madhavavarman IV was a member of a collateral branch of the Vishnukundin royal family ruling over a tract of territory granted to it as an appanage by the sovereign. It may be noted that the peace of the Vishnukundin dominion was considerably disturbed during the time of Indrabhattarakavarman. The Maukharis from the north and the Pallavas from the south invaded the kingdom. The dayadas or the cognates belonging to the collateral branches of the royal family taking advantage of the foreign invasions rose up in rebellion

against him. Particular emphasis is laid on Indrabhattaraka's conflict with his dayadas in all the inscriptions of his son Vikramendrabbhattaraka II. In the Chikkulla plates, it is stated that he (Indrabhattaraka) scattered the whole body of his dayadas by knitting his eye brows; in the Tummalagudem plates it is said that he destroyed completely the multitude of his dayadas; and in the Tundi grant it is asserted that he put to fight and ruined all his dayadas by his attacks. Madhavavarman IV was obviously one of the dayadas referred to in these inscriptions. He may have suffered defeat at the hands of Indrabhattaraka but was not destroyed by him. ^{as}~~his~~ ~~estate~~ ^{his} lay far way from the capital on the northern side of the kingdom in the vicinity of Maukhari territories, his submission could not have been permanent. He must have repudiated his allegiance and considered himself independent as he had reckoned his regnal years, from A.D. 546, when he succeeded to the family estate; and his reign naturally ran parallel to those of Indrabhattaraka and his son Vikramendrabbhattaraka for the duration of their rule.

Having thus fixed the time and the chronological limits of the reigns of Indrabhattaraka and Vikramendrabbhattaraka II and Madhavavarman IV, and also explained how the last mentioned came to rule simultaneously with the other two, we may now proceed with the reconstruction of the chronology of the earlier kings of the dynasty. Vikramendra I, the father of Indrabhattaraka did not, as stated already, ascend the throne, although he was the son of Vakataka Mahadevi, and an ornament

both of the Vishnukundin and Vakataka royal families. It was Madhavavarman II, son of Devavarman, the senior half-brother of Indrabhattaraka who preceded him on the Vishnukundin throne. As this Madhavavarman ruled, according to the Ipuru plates II for 47 years⁴⁹, his reign must have lasted from A.D.482 to 529. Madhavavarman II, the grandfather of Madhavavarman III, was his immediate predecessor. As the former ruled, according to Ipuru plates I⁵⁰ for 37 years his reign must have lasted from 445 to 482 A.D. As Madhavavarman's father, Govindavarman I was the immediate predecessor who ruled, according to his Tummalagudem plates I for 37 years he must have held sway over the kingdom from A.D.408 to 445. It is not known how long Madhavavarman I and Indravarman, the father and grandfather of Govindavarman I ruled. Assigning the conventional 25 years for each of them, they may both be considered to have ruled for a period of 50 years, Madhavavarman I from A.D.383 to 408; and his father Indravarman from A.D.358 to 383. If the chronology formulated here is correct, the beginning of the Vishnukundin rule may be placed in the middle of the 4th century A.D.



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The above theory of ~~Dr.~~ N. Venkataramanayya appears to be reasonable and hence acceptable.

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(iii) INFLUENCE OF SATAVAHANAS ON VISHNUKUNDIN'S CULTURE,

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The mighty Satavahana empire too went the way of all empires, 'though valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy and decay'. But while it lasted, it imparted more stability and security to the life of the people, the inhabitants of the vast regions of the Deccan, than any other earlier Indian power had ever done. The Satavahanas ruled on strong in will and stronger in action.

The Satavahana empire broke up into small kingdoms at war with one another. Many parts of the Satavahana empire were under feudatory families during its last days. The Ikshvakus were one such family. The Brihatphalayanans were also feudatories under the Satavahanas. The Salankayanas identified with the Salankeni of Ptolemy, must have been another feudatory family under the Satavahanas.

After the Satavahanas, the Ikshvakus maintained and added to the Satavahana traditions. After the Ikshvakus the Salankayanas, Pallavas and Vishnukundins continued to sow the seeds of their own culture far and wide.

Of all the dynasties that ruled over Andhra Desha after the fall of the mighty Satavahana empire, the Vishnukundins proved to be the true successors of the Satavahanas in respect of culture, religion, language, art and architecture, etc., though there is a gap of about hundred years between the fall and rise of the two dynasties.

I. Religion:-

Some of the Satavahana kings performed yagnas; they patronised Brahmanism as well as Buddhism. One of them even called himself "the unique Brahmin". A wealthy king in those days could acquire superiority of higher caste over fellow-tribes-men through, a rebirth ceremony called the 'hiranyagarbha'. The golden 'womb' from which the rebirth took place went to the officiating Brahmins as their fee. This ceremony ^{is} ~~was~~ described in the puranas and mentioned in royal inscriptions. Though the Satavahana inscriptions do not mention this ceremony, the most powerful among their kings claimed to have performed vedic sacrifices like Aswamedha and Rajasuya, involving huge gifts to the Brahmins.¹ New gods and goddesses developed, better suited to the rustic mentality of the people, like Siva Parvati, Ganesa, Krishna etc. The Gatha Saptasati refers to Siva (I,1: V, 48; V,55; VII, 100) Gauri (I,1, II, 51; VII, 100), Ganesa, (IV, 72) and Krishna (I, 89; II,12; II,14; V, 47) besides Indra, Vishnu, etc., worship of the Sun, the Buddha's feet and innumerable village deities developed side by side. Thus, the two radically different systems could co-exist side by side with rivalry or conflicts.

The Vishnukundins were patrons of Buddhism as well as Brahminism. Names like Vikramendra, Govinda, Madhava, and Indrabhattaraka prove their attachment to Brahmanism. Many of them bore titles of Parama Maheswara and Parama Bhagavata. On the other hand, they bestowed liberal grants to Buddhist Viharas,. Govindavarman's Tummalagudem charter², the earliest record of this family describes him as a believer in

Varnasrama dharma, builder of "temples, viharas, assembly halls, wells, tanks and gardens", and giver of wealth to "beggars, ascetics (bhikshus) brahmins, destitutes, sick people and the poor". His wealth was the teaching of Bodhisatva. He gave the village Penakapara to one, who was "Versed in the eighteen schools of Buddhist dharma, endowed with the qualities of the thirty two great men, and who performed yajnas according to the stipulated injunctions for saving humanity from the three fold pain of life, death and sorrow". The grant was for the "Uninterrupted provision of lamps, incense, perfumes, flowers, flags, drinks and foods, beds, seats, grass, medicine and repair work", to the vihara bestowed by his Chief Queen Paramamahadevi. The finances for the construction of this vihara were provided from the royal exchequer. This record "opens with a long invocation to the Buddha". Another Tummalagudem charter issued by Vikramendra-bhattaraka-varma of the same family, records the gift of another village Irunneru to the same vihara. The donor is described as a "great respecter of Buddhist philosophy", and as one who "acquired great merit through the benevolence of brahmins on account of the great monasteries he had constructed." These two inscriptions show how slender the distinction was between Buddhism and Brahminism in the fifth and sixth centuries. Though the stupas and viharas were still built for the Buddha by the ladies of the royal family, several of the kings and their officials followed

the Brahmanic Hindu dharma. It is said that Maharaja Madhavavarma, a great conqueror belonging to the Vishnukundin dynasty, performed eleven asvamedhas, thousands of kratus, sarvamedha kratu, a hundred thousand bahusuvarna, paundarika, purusha medha, vajapeya, yudha, rajasuya, pradhiraja, and prajapatya.

Under the Vishnukundins, Buddhism continued to lose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishnukundin period.

While the Vishnukundin kings were staunch followers of the vedic religion, some of their records are in fact Buddhistic in nature and stand witness to the liberal policy of religious tolerance of the kings.³ Before the advent of the Vishnukundins, the Andhra country had several Buddhist establishments in places like Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Yeleswaram, Jaggayyapeta, Guntupalli etc., Hiuen Tsang who visited the country soon after the disappearance of the Vishnukundins informs us the existance of some twenty Buddhist monasteries with more than 3000 brethren in the area.⁴ The objects of worship at Amaravati are the stupas, small and big, the foot prints (Paduka) of the great teacher, the "trisula" emblem etc. Regarding the trisula emblem and the pillar supporting it, Burgess says "the sides of the pillar supporting the trisula are always represented as in flames," and as Ferguson has remarked, this seems to be the counterpart of the Agni linga of Siva.⁵

The Naga cult in Buddhism during Satavahana period is also noteworthy. Serpents are represented as entwining the stupas. Both at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, the Buddha is represented as seated on Nagas with their hoods just above his head. The snake cult was so widely prevalent in these parts of Andhra Desa.

Very interesting specimen of a dull redware globular pot with a lid profusely decorated with snakes and human female figurines has been recovered outside the Garbhagriha of the temple structure at the north-west corner of the antarala during the recent archaeological excavations at Keesaragutta, which is believed to be the capital of the Vishnukundins.⁶ This is very unique since this type of pot has not been found in any other excavations so far carried out ~~by~~ ^{in this region} ~~this department~~. It is a globular vase with flat out-curved rim and narrow neck. There are five terracotta ^{applied} human female figurines encircled by serpents on the belly of the pot at equal distances in a sitting posture resting their hands on the knees. The lid is also decorated with a female figurine surrounded by a snake; the head of the snake is broken. The belly of the pot is decorated with seven serpents in their full length beautifully moulded exhibiting artistic skill. This clearly shows that the Vishnukundins followed the religious faiths of the Satavahanas.

II. Language:-

Pali, a form of prakrit, became the language of Buddhism, while Sanskrit continued to be that of Brahminism. All the

early Buddhist writings were in Pali. The story of Gunadhya proves beyond doubt that prakrit was more popular than sanskrit during the rule of the Satavahanas, that some of the kings did not even understand the meaning of Sanskrit words, that the Satavahana ruler in question turned towards Sanskrit because of the taunting remarks of his Sanskrit knowing queen, and the Gunadhya wrote his 'Ocean of Stories' in Paisachi, a form of Prakrit which was understood by all, "including Chandalas". Out of innumerable inscriptions of the Satavahanas, there is one solitary inscription in Sanskrit, A Nasik inscription, which contains a mixture of Sanskrit, and Pali, was composed by one "who wished to write Sanskrit, but did not know the language quite in the form which was finally given to it by the great grammarians and other authors."⁷

The Andhras, as devoted followers of Buddhism, naturally adopted the language of their master, side by side with their own native tongue, Telugu. The Myakadoni inscription (Kurnool district) reveals a linguistic form, for the first time, which can be proved to be Telugu beyond doubt.⁸ A village by name Vepuraka, (Vemu + Uru) is mentioned in this inscription.

A slab among the Amaravati sculptures contains a word nagabu, serpent. Thus, the discovery of two words Vepuraka, and nagabu, belonging to the Satavahana period establishes a body of information which is highly valuable for the history of Telugu language.

Prakrit was very popular among the masses during the Satavahana rule; besides prakrit there were a number of 'desa bhashas'. Eighteen desabhashas were mentioned by Kautilya, Vatsyayana, and Bharata, of which the Andhra is one. As the political power in the Andhra region was wielded by a Prakrit - speaking dynasty, the language of the country was naturally subjected to the influence of Prakrit, the language of the rulers. A remarkable feature of this period is the progressive replacement of Prakrit by Sanskrit in royal charters. As already said, the inscriptions of the Satavahanas were all in Prakrit. Their successors continued tradition for some decades. But their characters disclose a gradual change from Prakrit to Sanskrit.

All the inscriptions of the Vishnukundins are in Sanskrit. Chikkulla plates contain highly incorrect Sanskrit mixed with Prakrit words. "That the writer's vernacular was Telugu is proved by the ending of the word" Samvassarambul" for samvatsarah" in line 26.⁹

The Vishnukundins loved learning like the Satavahanas, Govindavarman II was a learned monarch, well versed in the Buddhist scriptures and all the sastras. Some of the kings were distinguished men of letters. Vikramendra I is stated to have been a maha - kavi (great poet), Madhavavarman IV, Janasraya, wrote a sanskrit work 'Janasraya Chandovichiti'. It is a commentary on a work on poetics written under the patronage of Janasraya. The work mentions about dvipada and tripada also. Therefore, we can infer that verses were being

written in Telugu as far back as the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.¹⁰

At Keesaragutta, very near to the western gate-way there is small label inscribed in archaic Telugu, datable to Vishnukundin period, the characters exactly resembling those found in the copper plate inscriptions of the period of Madhava Varman II. The label reads as 'Tulachuvaanru' - a purely Telugu term which means carvers or engravers. Through these Telugu words and many others found in Vishnukundin charters such as Ravirevu, Lenduluru, Penakaparru, it is evident that Telugu language had reached the final stage of evolution and Vishnukundins were the first rulers to have patronised the Telugu language.¹¹ Telugu verses must have been in vogue during the reign of Vishnukundin kings, but they did not get a place in literature.⁵

III. Coinage:

The standard coinage of the Satavahanas was of great economic significance. In the absence of silver in the south, lead was the only alternative, with which the Satavahanas maintained the monetary balance between the two currency systems (i.e. of copper in the north and of silver in the west). More or less the same is the significance of their coins ~~ballion~~.¹²

Some copper and potin coins issued by the early Satavahana kings have been recently collected from Kotilingala.¹³ Hoards of Satavahana coins have also been collected from the excavations conducted at Yeleswaram, Peddabankur; The Satavahana coins were of lead, potin, copper, and silver with

no pretensions to artistic merit. The symbols on them are the chaitya, bow, elephant, lion, horse, and the so called Ujjain symbol.¹⁴ Nahapana struck coins of both copper and silver. Gauthamiputra Satakarni restruck most of the silver coins which had been issued in the name of Nahapana.¹⁵ There is a large collection of Satavahana coins from the Kareemnagar region which include the coins of the Satavahanas, Satakarni I, Gauthamiputra Satakarni, Vasistiputra Pulamavi, Siva Siri Pulamavi, Yajna Satakarni and Rudra Satakarni.

Smith¹⁶ noticed that the coins of the dynasty are northern rather than southern in type and in fact have nothing in common with the peculiar coinage of the south. But it may be pointed out that the peculiar coinage of the south is evidently of a later date than the times of Satavahanas. The chief characteristic of the Satavahana coinage is the use of metals like potin and lead, the former being more predominant.

Hoard of Vishnukundin coins were found at several places in Andhra desa including Yeleswaram, Bhongir taluk of Nalgonda District, Sultanabad taluk of Kareemnagar district, Keesaragutta in Rangareddy district.

The coins found at Yeleswaram are of an alloy of copper and zinc, bearing a vase^h lion symbol. The coins recovered from Nalgonda district and Kareemnagar district are of copper and round in shape. These coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse.¹⁷

In the course of excavations at the temple complex on the top of Keesaragutta many Vishnukundin coins bearing a squatting lion with a spiralled tail and raised fore-paw on the obverse, a poornaghata flanked by two lamp stands all enclosed in rayed circle on the reverse were found.¹⁸

On some of the coins found at Yeleswaram the letters "vi-ka-ra-ma" are traced. Vikramendravarma II of the Vishnukundin dynasty must be the only king to whom these coins can be assigned.¹⁹

An exceptionally large number of Vishnukundin coins has been reported from several sites in Maharashtra. At first glance they give an appearance of being copper coins and look rather heavy in proportion to their size. But a recent metallurgical analysis has revealed a peculiarity of their composition in as much as they comprise an iron core with the coating of a thin sheet of copper on the surface.²⁰ So far as Maharashtra is concerned, the coins of Vishnukundins first came to light in the course of archaeological excavations at Brahmapuri, an elevated mound on the western outskirts of the city of Kolhapur on the right bank of the Panchaganga river. Only a solitary coin was recovered in layer 4 of square II. Although the coin is left undescribed in the excavation report, according to P.L.Gupta, it bears a lion to the right on one side and a jar flanked by a trident on either side within the rayed circle on the other.²¹ The discovery of this coin is very important in as much as it provides a missing link between the close of the Satavahana

period and the Silahara period and affords necessary evidence for dating the layer in question in the fifth-sixth century A.D.

P.L.Gupta's statement that the discovery of this coin "makes it clear that the Brahmapuri site was occupied by the Satavahanas only for a short time before they were eclipsed by the Vishnukundins", is wide of the mark, for there was a long chronological gap between the eclipse of the Satavahana power and the rise of the Vishnukundins.²² Nevertheless, it is certain that the Vishnukundins were definitely influenced by the Satavahanas in minting coins also.

IV. Art and Architecture:

Art received a tremendous fillip under the patronage of the Satavahanas. Its main source of inspiration was Buddhism. "In welcoming the non-Aryan elements of society into its fold, Buddhism had to give recognition to the popular cults of the soil and of nature, and to their beliefs, practices and modes of worship. It soon led to the development of a Buddhist pantheon which was peopled by the fertility spirits and godlings of the earliest Dravidian region. . . Amongst the most prominent decorations are the carvings of the Yakshas and Yakshis and the nagas, originally associated with the forests, trees and still-waters as spirits and geni in non-Aryan India."²³ The symbolic representations of the Buddha were rooted in the beliefs and customs prevailing in the society of the day. His birth was illustrated by the lotus. His enlightenment was represented by the Bodhi tree.

His preaching of the sermon was suggested by a wheel. His nirvana was symbolised by stupa or funeral mound.

Although the subject matter of Andhra sculpture during Satavahana period was religious, it is significant that religion was used as an instrument for adding strength and beauty to the raptures of worldly life.²⁴ Amaravati Art is described as the most voluptuous and the most delicate flower of Indian sculpture. It is also characterised as the culmination of Indian art.

There are three exquisite dance scenes among the Amaravati carvings, all collectively performed. Some of the paintings in Ajanta caves depict the artistic life of our aucestors. The Ajanta caves represent the golden age of Indian painting. Literary evidence confirms the developed state of our arts in the Satavahana period. The 'Gathasaptha Sathi' contains innumerable references to the artistic tastes of our people.

The architecture of a monastery would generally be influenced by the doctrine of some particular sect. A study of the monastic architecture in the Nagarjunakonda valley reveals the evolution of Buddhist thought and modes of worship. The temple concept gained greater currency. The emphasis was transferred from the stupa to the shrine.²⁵ The image worship and the concomitant apsidal, and later on, square or oblong shrines were steps towards further popularization of Buddhism.²⁶ A number of Brahmanic cults - Saiva, Vaishnava, Skanda, etc., prevailed in the post-Satavahana period.

The Vishnukundins were patrons of Buddhism as well as Brahminism as already stated in the preceding paras. Temples, Viharas, assembly halls, wells, tanks and gardens were built. If we examine the temple architecture of some of the brahminical shrines in Andhra Desa, we can see that they are a continuation of Buddhist monasteries. Recent excavations at Rajahmundry revealed that a Saivaite shrine was built on a Buddhist chaitya with bricks. At Gollathagudi in Mahboobnagar district ruins of a Saivite shrine built with bricks is found in the temple complex which definitely goes back to Vishnukundin period.

The rock-cut cave temples at Vijayawada, Mogulrajapuram, and Undavalli disclose a striking similarity of brahmin and Buddhist architecture. The big temple at Undavalli displays the style of a vihara. If we examine the seals of the Vishnukundins copper -plate grants, the coins they struck and some of the carvings on the cave walls, all of which bear the lion symbol, we cannot but conclude that they were scooped out of the Buddhist structures during the suzerainty of the Vishnukundins.

The cave temples in and around Vijayawada, Mogulrajapuram and Undavalli have been rightly attributed to the Vishnukundins. The dvarapalas and pillars with lotus, vase and lion decorations remind us of the Buddhist sculptures of Amaravati. Right above the pillars are chaitya windows with heads introduced in them, besides floral designs flanking the windows and shovel - heads on top. There are

five rock-cut temples at Vijayawada, five at Mogulrajapuram and four at Undavalli. Those at Vijayawada and Mogulrajapuram were dedicated to the Trinity, while those at Undavalli to Vishnu. In one of the Mogulrajapuram caves we notice a row of lions and elephants beneath the figure of Nataraja with his eight arms crowning the front of the cave. This is exceedingly realistic. The eight armed Siva figure, even in its mutilated condition, is a great masterpiece of sculpture. This Nataraja is in the Urdhvajanu pose and is tampering Apasmarapurusha. It is rather unique and no where else is found. Considering all these facts the unique cave temple must be ascribed to the Vishnukundin period.²⁷

The temple in each of these caves consists of a rectangular pillared hall with a small shrine-chamber excavated in one of the side walls. It has no ornamentation within, but usually dvarapalas are carved in bold relief.

The Satavahanas and their immediate successors like Ikshvakus and Vishnukundins adopted the brick medium for the Buddhist stupas, chaityas and viharas from their very inception, as at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Ghantasala, Rajahmundry, Vijayawada (Mogulrajapuram hill top), etc., almost side by side with the end of the rock-cut architectural phase, when apparently a greater expansion in the erection of stupas in the riparian tracts and plain country was sought, and rocky scarps suitable for cave excavations were not available at every desired place, particularly in all the habitable river valleys in the Deccan. The continued use of brick medium

in the lower Deccan by early Hindu architectural pioneers, even with the admitted availability of stone - raw material of the requisite quality would have to be ascribed to the influence of age - long and customary use of brick by their Buddhistic fore-runners in the same region. The very earliest examples of Brahmanical structural architecture are mostly of brick medium and the possibility, for every single large sized temple of this kind which had survived in howsoever descript a form, there would have been atleast a hundred small to medium sized shrines which had totally perished without leaving a trace.²⁸

The excavations conducted at Keesaragutta by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, A.P., revealed a square brick shrine with a pedestal in the middle. The flooring inside the temple was paved with brick and a covered drain was provided at the north-east corner to conduct the waters of ablution to the outside. The square pedestal in the middle of the shrine has a square sacket for introduction of square based Linga, now missing, post-holes were noticed over the corners of the square pedestal, possibly to support wooden pillars. A running verandah had possibly existed on all sides of the shrine, supported by wooden pillars based on granite slabs. On the northern bank of the tank at the lower gradient of the Keesaragutta hill, a huge brick structure with five rooms prefaced by a rectangular hall, a square porch and flight of steps was unearthed. Facing this building on the north was found another elaborate flight

of steps with a moon stone, leading to another building consisting of six rooms in two rows with a central hall. The entire complex was protected by a brick used in the construction measured 46 x 25 x 7 cms.

The massive style of architecture of the multi-storied secular buildings at Keesaragutta may indicate that it may be the palace complex of the Vishnukundin period.²⁹ The Bana Lingas over brick pedestals, the two handed Vishnu sculpture carved on green limestone, the miniature temples with wagon-shaped vimanas, all found at Yeleswaram excavations are further examples of Vishnukundin art. A beautiful sculpture of Vishnu, head and feet mutilated, was found in Vishnukundin level associated with layer 4 at Yeleswaram. The modelling of torso and body was chaste and beautiful. This appears to be an early form of Vishnu holding a sakti or staff in his right hand and a conch in the left. The sculpture closely resembled late Amaravati carvings.³⁰

V. Military Organisation:

The military organisation of the Satavahanas reached a high water-mark. An Amaravati rail pillar depicts the art of war and military organisation. Cities were defended by high walls and ramparts. The walls and gateways were built of brick and mortar.³¹

The flooring inside the halls was paved with brick, measuring 56 x 27 x 7 cms. While the idea or concept of a fort as a military structure appears to have undergone several changes from time to time in its size, methods of

construction, disposition of various structures, additional defensive equipment, etc., depending on contemporary trends of warfares methods of attack and defence and weapons and implements of warfare. Forts in ancient Andhra were mainly built of perishable materials like mud and brick, as against stone, which became the chief material of later times.

The architecture of forts depends to a large extent upon the building materials and methods of construction in vogue in particular period. The earliest phase of fort architecture built with mud, morrum and brick represented by the forts of Satavahana and post-Satavahana periods like Dharanikota, Nagarjunakonda, Dhulikatta, and Kesaragutta, Nagarjunakonda had four phases of fortifications, the first built of rubble, the second of heaped up mud and morrum, and brick and the third of rubble and the fourth of stones.³²

Kesaragutta is an example of brick construction over rubble foundation. Kesaragutta was enclosed by a fort wall now defunct. There are presently traces of 3 metres broad dressed rubble stone foundation. The brick measuring 46 cm. x 25 x 7 cms used for raising superstructure is still visible all along the fortification wall in fragments and at some places intact. The fort was provided with three main gates on the east, west and the north, prefaced by strategic secondary walls in the shape of crescent bulge; some water gates were also provided at the water ponds for fetching

water into the fort. Traces of guard-rooms were found near the main gates and entire fort is studded with brick structures. There are no evidences of existance of any other fort belonging to Vishnukundin kings. According to one B.N.Sastry³³, the ancient hill-fort at Indrapalagutta in Ramannapet taluk of Nalgonda district on the banks of river Musi, belongs to Vishnukundins. This is doubtful and has got to be confirmed by conducting further explorations.

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(iv) ROYAL TITLES AND KINGSHIP

The evolution of Hindu royal titles and honorifics affords us a useful clue to the growth of the ideas of sovereignty in Ancient India. It is interesting to study the growth of Ancient Indian Kingship through the changing royal titles and epithets. These royal titles and honorifics went through a long process of evolution mirroring the change in the power and position of the king. Beginning with the simple rajan, royal titles, with the passage of time, became highly complex and rhetorical. In the medieval Hindu inscriptions we come across increasingly pompous and an ever-lengthening set of titles. The size of royal titles may indeed be adopted as a rough dating-standard of inscriptions the bulkier the title the later the period of the record.

The most frequently used term in the Vedas for the king is rajan. His office was created out of military necessity to lead people in battles and save them from defeats.¹ A member of the rajanya class, his duty was to give protection to people.² Rashtra, the earliest state developed by the Indo-Aryans belonged to rajan.³ He was the 'upholder of state'.⁴ The rajanyas were not only the protectors of realm, but were also the upholders of the cosmic law (ratasya gopah). In fact the function of king is considered to be so important that his office is given some kind of divinity. The king is twice greeted as Indrasakha⁵ and ardhadeva.⁶ Even in the Samhitas, apart from the normal rajan, we find certain regal

terms like samraj⁷, adhiraj,⁸ ekraj⁹, svaraj,¹⁰ etc., denoting greater power than rajan. These indicate a nascent beginning of the ideas of king's supremacy and imperialism. Samraj expresses a greater degree of power than rajan.¹¹ "The office of the rajan is lower and that of samraj is higher".¹² Samrat, explains Amarakosa, is one who has performed the rajasuya sacrifice and is the overlord of a mandala, with subordinate feudatories and princes. According to Aitareya-Brahmana¹³ ekraj is a ruler whose domains extend all over the earth from sea to sea 'Adhiraj' is interpreted by Macdonell and Keith as overlord. But taking into consideration the political condition of the time, when the great states were still in formation, they (Macdonell and Keith) could not bring themselves to believe that a real overlord existed in the Vedic society.¹⁴ N.N.Law has suggested that these different terms might signify different degrees of power or ranks among the kings brought about by the innumerable battles which were so common in the age.¹⁵

Most of these terms appear in the Brahmanas too. We, however, know it definitely that the power of king increased considerably during this period. The period was marked by an excessive religiosity and the development of a sacrificial cult. Sacrifices came to be given a sort of divine potency. Naturally the king's importance increased due to his participation in the sacrifices like rajasuya, vajapeya, and asvamedha which were so common in the age. He is now more pronouncedly called 'the guardian of law' and the 'sustainer of state'.

Dharmapati¹⁶ and dharmasya gopta¹⁷ and rastrabhrt¹⁸ are the appellations used for a king in the Brahmanas. There also occur the following terms: maharajya, rajadhirajya, samrajya, bhaujya, svarajya, and vairajya¹⁹. According to Kautilya Svarajya means 'self rule', vairajya 'sovereignty'.²⁰ Jayaswal interprets samrajya as a combination of monarchies or a federal imperialism around one dominant member.²¹ Maharaja obviously meant ruler of a large kingdom. In the Satapatha Brahmana we find the following significant sentence: "Before the slaying of Vrtra he was Indra, it is true. But after slaying Vrtra, he became Mahendra even as rajan or king becomes maharaja after obtaining the victory".²² This much, however, is sufficiently clear from these terms that the idea of absolutist kingship made considerable headway during the Brahmana period. The king came to be considered as both the head of the state as well as the guardian of moral law.

In the sixth century B.C. began the Magadhan imperialism which was to find its consummation during the Maurya rule. Practically the whole country was brought under one rule. It is natural to find in the literature of the period royal titles conveying the idea of supreme sovereignty and universal rulership. Chakkavatti (world ruler) is an often repeated royal title in the Buddhist literature. According to the Buddhist literature²³, Chakkavatti governs and abides by dharma and righteousness. While the ethical side of his function is emphasised by the Buddhist works, Kautilya²⁴ lays stress on the Chakravarti's military power and conquests. The chakravarti of the Arthashastra is an aggressor (vijiggeesu) set upon a

policy of digvijaya, whose sphere of influence extends from the Himalayas to the southern sea. Kautilya, however, does not overlook king's duties towards his subjects and the maintenance of moral law. He is to make people happy as well as moral (prajanam vinaye ratah). The development from rajan to chakravarti, is straight and natural. Chakravarti, actually is an amplified version of rajan. It contains the same two basic elements in the composition of its sovereignty the administration of kingdom and the maintenance of dharma or rta.

Strangely, however, in the Maurya inscriptions we do not find the use of any imperialistic title. Asoka was content with the simple raja. The Sungas too preferred the same appellation. Kharavela of Orissa is given similar simple titles.²⁴ He is called khemaraja (lord of security), vadharaja (lord of boundry), and dharmaraja (lord of justice). The Andhra Satavahanas in most of their inscriptions are found assuming only the modest title of rajan. Slightly more imposing titles like maharaja and rajaraja are applied for Gautamiputra Satakarni. The term svamin, which, according to Kautilya, was one of the seven elements of sovereignty, was used by the Satavahanas to stand for the sovereign himself.²⁵ From these inscriptions it appears that in actual practice kings had not yet started assuming the imperialistic titles met in the literature of the age and which were to become a common feature of later inscriptions.

But the exaltation of king's power can be traced from frequent use in inscriptions and coins of royal titles suggesting divinity. Devanampriya given to Asoka is the earliest of such titles found in inscriptions. Dasaratha, the grandson of Asoka, also assumed the same title.

Apart from those suggesting divinity, the normal titles of foreign rulers of the post-Mauryan period were maharaja and rajadiraja (usually coupled together), with their Greek equivalents basileos basileon. These titles were evidently borrowed from the Iranian Ksayathi-yanam ksayathiya.²⁶ This usual pair of titles were some times supplemented by some other epithets like mahata²⁷ or tratarā (Greek megas, saviour)²⁸ by more ostentatious kings. Gondopharnes assumed slightly loftier titles of great kings, supreme king of kings.²⁹ Some kings also assumed titles like dharmasthita and sachadbarmasthita³⁰ showing the adoption of the Buddhist ideal of righteousness and also probably the Brahmanic conception that the king is the guardian of law. It was also in this period that another Iranian term satrap or ksatrapa found a place in Indian polity. The word satrap originally meant a provincial governor. It was Sanskritized into ksatrapa and soon a more dignified term mahaksatrapa was coined. Originally local governors, many of the Ksatrapas and mahaksatrapas set up independent powerful monarchies. They retained their old title just as Pushyamiitra continued to be known as senapati even after he became the king.

The Guptas were the first Indian monarchs who really began the custom of assuming high-sounding and rhetorical titles. The Lichchavis (of Nepal), the Maghas, the Bharasivas, the Vakatakas and the first two Guptas continued old practice of using the simple maharaja. But from the third Gupta, Chandra-gupta I, the rulers of the dynasty bore the imposing Maharajadhiraja. The titles continued to multiply in course of time. In the Udayagiri Cave Inscription³¹ Chandragupta II is styled as paramabhattaraka. In the Gadghwa inscription the same monarch is called paramabhagawata.³² In a series of Gupta kings are given the following triple appellations; paramadaivataparama bhattaraka maharajadhiraja.³³ The kings of later Gupta line made a minor change in the triplet. They substituted paramadaivata by paramesvara.³⁴ Similarly we find that the Vardhanas are given such imperialistic titles as paramabhaattaraka and maharajadhiraja in their inscriptions.³⁵ The 'birudas' and the honorifics of the Gupta kings on their coins are extremely rhetorical.³⁶ The practice of assuming high flown titles, no doubt, indicates an increase in royal power and prestige. It is interesting to note here that the weaker kings of this period (Gupta-Vardhana period), the founders of a rising dynasty, are usually found using only maharaja. It is only when the dynasty gets established we find the kings beginning to appropriate titles like maharajadhiraja.³⁷ The first three Gupta's kings used only maharaja. Similar was the case of the later Guptas and the Maukharis etc.,

The tendency to attach divinity to the king noticed in the previous periods continued. Samudragupta is described as equal to Kubera, Indra, Varuna and Yama.³⁸ His son Chandra-gupta II, we are told shown upon the earth like the Sun radiant.³⁹ In spite of the ridicule poured by Bana on the false claim to divinity by kings,⁴⁰ the custom was taking a growing hold of the country. Harsa's contemporary Pulakesin II had the biruda, paramesvara which became the common appellation of the later kings of the Western Chalukyas.⁴¹ In the next period it became a common feature for kings to assume divinity. The growing influence of the Dharmasastras and the increasing popularity of the idea of incarnation were powerful factors working in this direction. At first sight one gets the impression from these titles that king's absolutism reached a glorious height.

The Vakataka kingdom was fairly extensive but its rulers were content with the mere title of maharaja only one amongst them, pravarasena I who was undoubtedly a great conqueror, took the title 'Samrat', probably he had performed the Vajapeya sacrifice. His successors reverted to the old and simple title maharaja;⁴² Vishnukundin rulers were also content with the title maharaja. Madhavavarman II is said to have performed the agnishtoma, krathusa hasra, asvamedha sarvamedha, purushamedha, bahusuvana, vajapeya,

paundarika, rajasuya, but he was content with the title maharaja.

The following titles figure in the records of
Vishnukundin kings:-

I. The Tummalagudem plates I:

Sri maharajendravarmanah . . . maharajasri Madhava-
varmanah (first plate 2nd side fourth line) Maharajasri
Govindavarmanah (second plate second side lines-12-13).

The Tummalagudem Plates II:

Maharajasri Govindavarmanah (first plate second side
6th line).

Maharajasri Madhavavarmanah, Maharajasri vikramandrasya
(second plate - first side - lines 9-10).

The Ipur Plates I:

Maharajasya Sri Madhavavarmanaha (first plate -
second side - lines 3-4).

The Ipur plates II:

Maharajasya Sri Govindavarmanah (first plate - second
side - lines 2 & 3)

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarmanah (second plate first side
8th line)

The Ramathirtham plates:

Srimanmaharaja Madhavavarmah (first plate second side -
2nd line)

Srimanindravarmakhyah Raja

Sriman indravarmakhyah Raja

(second plate - first side - 5th and 6th line)

The Chikkulla plates:

Maharajasya

(second plate - first side - line 7)

Maharajasya Sri Indrabhattarakavarmana

(third plate - first side 16th line)

Maharaja Sriman Vikramendravarma

(third plate - second side - 19th line)

The Tundi grant:-

Maharaja Sri Madhavavarmanah

(second plate - first side and third plate second side line 8-9)

Maharaja Sri Vikramendrabbhattarakavarmamah

(second plate second side line 13 - third plate first side line 13)

Maharajendrabbhattarakavarmanah

(third plate second side line-20)

The Pulomburu plates:

Maharajah Sri Madhavavarma

(second plate first side 14th line)

Thus it can be seen that all most all the Vishnukudin kings including Madhavavarman II who performed eleven asvamedhas and rajasuya bore the title of Maharaja. Performance of 'asvamedha' and 'rajasuya' indicate that the king attained the position of a sarvabhauma or paramount sovereign, who was the overlord of many subordinate kings. The statement that Madhavavarman II performed eleven asvamedhas implies that he embarked on digvijaya expeditions and subjugated the monarchs of the neighbouring countries who held out

against his authority as many times. He seems to have built up his empire after a series of conquests spread over several years of warfare and he appears to have been powerful war-lord. Nevertheless he was content with the title 'maharaja'.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the rulers of the contemporary dynasties of the times also bear the title of 'maharaja'. Chamtamula the first king of the Ikshvaku dynasty possessed sovereign powers as indicated by his title "Maharaja" attached to his name. He is referred to as Rajan in the memorial pillar inscription. In the Ikshvaku records the titles Rajan and maharaja are indifferently used. Siri Virupurushadatta bears the title of Rajan in most of the inscriptions and Maharaja in inscriptions G. and H. Bhuvula Siri Chamtamula is styled Maharaja in G. and Rajan in G2 and G3.⁴³

The Brihatphalayana gotra king Jayavarman bears the title of Maharaja as mentioned in the Kondamudi copper plate grant.⁴⁴ Whilst Damodaravarman the Ananda king and the Pallava kings of the period bear the title of 'maharaja', Attivarman, another Ananda king is styled "Rajan".⁴⁵ The Salankayana kings Devavarman, Hastivarman, Chandavarman, Saktivarman etc., also bear the title "Maharaja", as can be seen from the Ellora grant⁴⁶, Peddavegi⁴⁷ and Kollair plates.⁴⁸

Dr. K. Gopalachari⁴⁹ observes that the Satavahana polity confirmed to the rule laid down in the sastras; its keynote

was the sovereign. Monarchy was hereditary. Hereditary kingship is suggested by the expression Dasapurushamrajya a kingdom of ten generations - occurring in the Satapatha Brahmana.⁵⁰

The Vishnukundin monarchy did not claim any devine origin. The epithet appearing in line 8 of Tundi copper plate grants,⁵¹ viz., "devatidevasya Maharaja" which is attributed to Madhavavarman does not indicate any claim of devine origin, Vishnukundin evidently followed the ancient Indian tradition in this regard. In fact,⁵² observed by one recent writer, the Vishnukundin kings did not attach much importance to the titles like Maharaja etc., and even though they were supreme kings they did not always consider themselves supreme.

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(v) THE EMBLEM OF THE VISHNUKUNDINS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE:

As was the Bull or Nandi ~~In~~ the Pallavas¹ and the Salankayanas², the elephant to the Ikshvakus; the Board to the Chalukyas³, Monkey to the Ananda Gotrins⁴, so was the lion to the Vishnukundins, an emblem, symbolising the assiduity necessary for the achievement of greatness. The lion emblem of Vishnukundins was represented on the seals of their charters from Tummalagudem, Ramathirtham, Chikkulla, etc. The circular seal of the Tummalagudem plates of Govindavarman I bears the figure of a lion.⁵ The oval seal of the Ramathirtham plates of Indravarman shows the faint figure of an advancing lion with its left fore-paw raised, neck erect, mouth wide open, and the tail raised above the back so as to end in a loop.⁶ Chikkulla plates of Vikramendravarman-II consists of a circular seal bearing in relief, on a slightly countersunk surface, a well executed lion, which stands to the proper right, raises the right fore-paw, opens the mouth, and apparently has a double tail.⁷ Vishnukundin coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse.⁸

The lion signifies fierce energy and undaunted courage which are the very qualities necessary for success in war. The Indian Earth Goddess is also called a lioness in a passage occurring in the Yajurveda and the Satapatha Brahmana,⁹ and later on the lion is a favourite animal of Parvathi just as the bull is of Siva.

Symbols survive for ages, and so also traditions relating to their meaning, "Power over the images or inprints gives over the person" is a conception. Earth goddess or Mother goddess was essentially connected with good luck and prosperity. For this reason symbols sacred to her may be stamped on coins etc.,¹²

Another suggestion that is offered is - the lion was the Andhra emblem and their successors, the Vishnukundins, might have retained it.¹³ K. Gopalachari¹⁴ opined that the lion device was perhaps Buddhist in origin and that the lion motif at Amaravati is sufficient evidence.

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(vi)
(iv)

THEIR CAPITAL

The following names of places figure in the Vishnukundin records.

I. Ipur C.P. I	Veilembali Kudavada
II. Ipur II	Amarapura
III. Ramathir tham	Peruvadaka Puranisangama
IV. Chikkulla C.P.	Regora Ravi Reva Dendulura
V. Pulomburu C.P.	Pulomburu Maindavatica Trivaranagara Kunruru
VI. Tummalagudem I	Penkapara
VII. Tummalagudem II	Erundero Sakrapura Indrapura
VIII. Tundi C.P.	Tundi
IX. Khanapur	Retturuka Belivati Kolivatika Vattarika
X. Velpuru	Velpuru

None of the records furnish us with any definite information regarding the capital of these rulers. Different

Scholars identified different places as the capital city of the Vishnukundins, propounding their own theories.

Kielhorn looks upon Vinukonda as the survival of the dynastic¹ name. K.Gopalachari² supports the above theory and says that "this looks quite probable".

The argument of Kielhorn is as follows:

"The name Vishnukundin has not, so far as I know, been met with in other epigraphical records. Considering the locality where these plates come from, as well as the facts that the writer's Vernacular was Telugu and that, the donor worshipped the Lord of Sriparvata, which I take to the sacred Srisaila in the Kurnool district, I believe that the word survives in Vinukonda, the name of a hill fort and town in the Krishna district, about 95 kms. east of Srisaillam and 80 kms. south of the river Krishna, and that this Vinukonda, which is reported to be a place of great antiquity, was really the capital of the Vishnukundins".

The above view was supported by B.V.Krishna Rao³ but N.Venkataramanayya⁴ refused the argument of B.V.Krishna Rao.

From the Ipur plates II which Madhavavarman III, the son of Devavarman and the grandson of Madhavavarman II, issued in his 47th regnal year, we learn that he bore the title Trikuta-Malayadhipati and that his capital was Amarapura. N.Venkataramanayya identified this Amarapura as "Amaravathi" on the banks of the Krishna⁵. One Scholar⁶ emphatically asserted that "Trivaranagara" which occurs in the Ipur I⁷

and Pulomburu⁸ plates was the capital of the Vishnukundins; he identified this Trivaranagara with the modern Tiruvuru in the Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh. Trivaranagara was identified with Tripuri the modern Tewar near Jabbalpur by Sri H. Krishna Sastri.⁹ D.C.Sircar believed that Trivaranagara is the city of (the king) Trivara.¹⁰

Another writer¹¹ has taken the stand that this Trivara or Trivaranagara is supposed to be the capital of the Panduvamsi kings, and to have been so named after Trivaradeva who ruled over south Kosala and the Chanda district and wrested the Chattisgarh district from the Vakatakas whose power at this time was waning.¹²

"Madhavavarman" is known to have had a Vakataka princess for his queen and begotten by her, a son named Vikramendra. It may be reasonably inferred that the Vakataka successor of Harisena, in dire danger from Trivaradeva, appealed for Vishnukundin help. Madhavavarman defeated Trivaradeva or his successor and saved the drowing Vakataka, who out of gratitude gave the Vishnukundin a daughter of his in marriage. It must be in connection with the campaign against Trivaradeva that Madhavavarman conquered the eastern districts of Telangana.¹³

There is another school of thought¹⁴ that the biruda Trivara-nagara bhavana-parama yuvati - jana - viharana rata associated with the name of Madhavavarman IV in the inscriptions shows that he was a native of Trivaranagara, identified with modern Tewar on the banks of Narmada, which was in all

probability the headquarters of the appanage granted to his family. The phrase 'Trivaranagara' that figures in the Ipur I and Pulomburu plates is to be considered in this connection. It is stated in Ipur plates I that Sri Maharaja Sri Madhavavarman was the delighter of the hearts of the youthful ladies in the palace of Trivaranagara. Pulomburu plates describes him as the ruler who was, among other things, fond of sporting with young ladies in the mansions of Trivaranagara. There was no city that flourished in Andhra Desa with the name Trivaranagara as such. It is not unreasonable to consider Trivaranagara as three sacred or great nagaras (cities) as the compound indicates. It is also quite probable that Vengi Twar and Keesaragutta must be the three great Nagaras.¹⁵

An allusion relating to Madhavavarman IV lead us to infer that Vijayawada might be the seat of administration of Vishnukundins. The story goes like this. "King Madhavavarman was ruling Andhra Desa Vijayawada as his capital. A boy came under the wheels of the chariot driven by the son of Madhavavarman, and died. The mother who lost her lone son in the tragic incident approached the king for justice. The king conducted enquiry and having found his son guilty, ordered for his (Yuvaraja) execution.

Mallaeswaraswamy was pleased with the impartial judgement given by the king and the Yuvaraja was given life. The rock cut temples in and around Vijayawada attributed to Vishnukundin period may also support the above theory. But this is a bold attempt to convert legend into history.

Some argue that Indrapuri or Indrapalanagara on the banks of river 'Musi' was the capital of the founders of the Vishnukundin dynasty.¹⁶ Evidences of ruined ancient fort on the Indrapalagutta in Ramannapet taluk of Nalgonda district, ruins of temples residential complexes constructed with brick in extensive area stretched over three miles, a deep tank just 200 yards away from the fort, and other structures like Saiva temple etc., strengthen the above view. It is presumed that the first capital of Vishnukundins - Indrapalanagar extended on either banks of the river Musi covering the modern villages Valigonda, Nagavaram and Tummalagudem.¹⁷ The name of Indrapura figures in the Tummalagudem copper plates I and II. The queen of Govindavarman I, the grandson of Indravarman I, is said to have built a Buddhist monastery there. The city was possibly founded by, and named after, this Maharaja Indravarman I as in the case of the Vakataka capital Pravarapura founded by, and named after Pravarasena II. May be, it was the capital of the dynasty during the early period.¹⁸

There is another argument that 'Velpur' in Sattenapalli taluk of Guntur district, twelve kilometres south of ~~Krishna~~ ^{Krishna} River where a stone inscription of ~~the~~ Madhavavarman II, was found, might be the capital of ^{the} Vishnukundins in all probability. It is argued that Velpur is the sanskritised form 'Amarapura' (Velpu = Amara, Uru = Puramu) and that this village might have flourished as a capital of early Vishnukundin kings upto Govindavarman.¹⁹

The place of issue of the charter (Chikkulla copper plate grant), 'Lendulura' has been identified with the modern Denduluru near Eluru in West Godavari district.²⁰

As this place is on the ruins of the city of Vengi, scholars have taken Lendulura as the capital of the Vishnukundins.²¹

However this was refuted by another writer that the place was specially mentioned in the charter as a place of issue, not because it was the capital, but because it was not the normal residence (i.e capital) of the Vishnukundin king.²²

Refuting the argument identifying Amaravati as Amarapura, the capital of Vishnukundins V.V.Krishna Sastry²³ has stated that the name Amaravati came to vogue only after 11th century A.D. and the previous name was only Dhanakataka or Dhanyakataka or Dhannakada, and that the archaeological evidences either at Vinukonda or Amaravati or Nagarjunakonda would definitely go against these arguments. He asserted that it is certain that the capital of Vishnukundins must have been located somewhere in Telangana and most probably in the vicinity of Tummalagudem, which was known as Indrapura or Indupurala in a Telugu inscription of 12th-13th century A.D.²⁴ He also opined that the outer and inner defensive fortification walls, the numerous religious and secular structures inside the fort, the coins, the inscribed labels, the pottery and other concomitant finds, all datable to the Vishnukundin period are evidences enough to prove that

Keesaragutta was once the capital of Vishnukundins. This conclusion was evidently drawn from the fact that no inscription belonging to Ikshvakus, Salankayanas, Brihatphalayanans and Anandagotrins has been found in Telangana area till now. The following historical events give support to the above conclusion.

Madhavavarman II while extending his kingdom through his valour and prowess, must have put an end to the Salankayanas by defeating Nandivarman II or his successor, Skandavarma and occupied Vengi Desa around 462-64 A.D. It is evident that Vengi Desa was not under their suzerainty till then and he came from elsewhere and conquered it.

In this connection the observation of Fleet also furnishes the information that Keesaragutta was an important place in the early centuries of Christian era. Fleet observed "A study of the map has shown me the former existence of an early trading route, of which well marked traces still remain, from the east coast through Golconda or Haidarabad, Ter and Paithan, to Broach There were two starting points. One was Masulipatam, on the coast, in the northern part of the Kistna District; and the road from this place took, not only the local traffic from the coast districts, on the north of the Krishna but also the sea-borne traffic from the far east." The other starting point was probably Vinukonda, inland, in the southern part of the same district, which would serve admirably as a collecting centre for the

local products of the sea-side country on the south of Krishna. The roads from these two places joined each other at a point about twenty six miles towards the east-by south from Haidarabad, or perhaps at a point about twenty-three miles further in the same direction. And from that point the single road ran in the most natural manner, through east country via, Haidarabad, Kalyani, Ter, Paithan and Daulatabad to 'Chandore' and Markinda in the west of the Nasik district. And only there, in the Ghats . . . commenced the real difficulties of journey . . .²⁵

The point about twenty six miles towards the east-by-south from Haidarabad where the roads joined each other is none other than Keesaragutta, in view of its importance of the place as a capital of the Vishnukundins.

Thus the theory of V.V.Krishna Sastry that Keesaragutta was the capital of early kings of Vishnukundins^{is} acceptable discarding all other theories.

The above theory is further strengthened by the following facts.

This part of the country attracted many ruling dynasties who built their capital cities and constructed forts both for defensive and administrative purposes.

Keesaragutta flourished as a capital city under the Vishnukundins.

Kolanupak which is 40 kilometres north east of Keesaragutta was the seat of administration under Kalyani Chalukyas. There are traces of mud fortification at Kolanupak besides Jaina temples etc.,

Bhongir is another hill fort town, 15 kilometres from Keesaragutta, which flourished under Kalyani Chalukyas, Kakatiyas etc., during 9th to 11th centuries, the fort still stands majestically even today as a reminiscence of the bygone days.

Warangal is a Sthala Durga built by the Kakatiyas who ruled over Telangana for about three centuries. Warangal is 100 kms. from Keesaragutta.

Golconda, 40 kms. west of Keesaragutta, is a well known fort which played very important role in the mediaeval history of Deccan.

Thus the region around Keesaragutta was the political nucleus right from the early years of the Christian era to the mediaeval period.

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(vii) LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND EDUCATION

In the sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions of the Pre-Chalukyan period we find several Telugu words mostly the names of the villages and the names of the persons. Some Telugu words found place in the 'Gathasaptha sati'¹ of Satavahana king Hala belonging to 1st century A.D. We find the following names of the villages in the inscriptions of Satavahanas and Ikshvakus.

1. Kondavali inscription² - Khadavali (Kodavali)
2. Macdone Inscription³ - Vepurake (Vepuru)
3. - Mandara
- Hiralore
- Kudura⁴
4. - Halampura⁵

The inscriptions of Anandagotrins, Brihatphalayanans, Salankayanas, and Kalingas also furnish us the following names of the villages.

Ananda Gotrins

1. Mattepadu C.P. of Damodaravarma - Kamgura
2. Gorantla C.P. of Attivarma⁶ - Tanrikonra
Antukura

Brihatphalayanans

3. Kondamudi C.P. of Jayavarma⁷ - Kudura
Pamtura
Kondamudi

Salankayanas

4. Eluru C.P. of Vijayadevavarma⁸ - Elura
5. Pedavegi Inscription of Nandivarma⁹ - Pralura
Mundura
Chencheruva Grame
Kamburancheruve
6. Kolleru inscription of Vijaya - Kuravaka
Nandivarman¹⁰
7. Kanteru inscription¹¹ of Nandivarma - Kuruvada
8. Kanukollu C.P. of Skandavarma - Kompera
9. Kanteru C.P. of Vijayaskandavarma¹² - Chintapuri
Vekumari

Kalingas

10. Srungavarapukota inscription of - Achanta
Anantavarma¹³
11. Siripura C.P. of Anantavarma - Tontapara
Tellapalli-Vishaya
12. Tandivada inscription of Prithvi - Kondamanchi
Maharaja¹⁴
13. Chicacole C.P. of Prabhanjanavarma¹⁵ - Sarapalli
14. Sarabhavara inscription¹⁶ - Puloka (Pulaka)
15. Godavari C.Ps. of Prithivi Mula¹⁷ - Tanupeka
Kandali
Mugamuru
Irbuli

The following names appear in the Vishnukundin records.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Pulomburu C.P. | - Pulimburu
Mayandavatika
Kundururu |
| 2. Ipuru C.P. | - Kudavada
Velimbali |
| 3. Ipuru C.P. | - Marokaki
Kalika
Puranisangama |
| 4. Ramathirtham plates | - Peruvatika
Parrakivishaye
Denduluravasaka |
| 5. Chikkulla Plates | - Ravi Reva
Regonram
Netrapati vishaye |
| 6. Tummalagudem set I | - Penkaparra |
| 7. Tummalagudem Set II | - Irunde Ro |
| 8. Kandulapalem c.p. | - Tundi |

Proper names:

Besides the names of the kings we come across the following names of the donors etc., in the copper plate grants of the Vishnukundins.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| I. Ipur C.P. I | - i) Agni sarma |
| II. Ipur C.P. II | - i) Agni Sarma
ii) Indra Sarma |
| III. Ramathirtham C.P. | i) Nagasarma |

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| IV. Tundi grant | - i) Rudra Sarma |
| | ii) Swami Sarma |
| V. Pulemur C.P. | - i) Rudra Sarma |
| | ii) Dama Sarma |
| | iii) Siva Sarma |
| VI. Khanapur C.P. | i) Bolaswami |
| | ii) Kesavaswami |

Such proper names are found in the inscriptions of the other contemporary dynasties that ruled Andhra Desa, a few of which are given below.

- i) Ongode Inscription of Vijayaskandavarma¹⁸ - Golasarma
- ii) Gorantla Inscription of Athivarma¹⁹ - Kotti Sarma
- iii) Nedunga Raya copper plate grant of Vishnugopa²⁰ - Doddi Swami

The first part of the above names viz., Gola, Kotti, Doddi are Telugu words. It may therefore be asserted with confidence that the Telugu language was in usage among the people in Andhra Desa prior to 1st century A.D. itself as we find from the Hala's Gathasapthasati and the names of the villages, persons, etc. in the Prakrit and Sanskrit inscriptions.

The inscriptions of the Vishnukundins tell us that there were Brahmins who were conversant with the Vedas and Vedangas during their times besides the scholars in Buddhist literature.

The Tummalagudem copper plate grant of Vikramendra bhattarakavarma, Vikramendravarma was described as "Mahakaveh

parama sagathasya. This king appears to be a great poet and patronised scholars and poets.

All the Vishnukundin kings patronised Sanskrit as well as Telugu languages. They donated Agraharas to the Brahmins who were scholars and poets.

Agnisarma and Eswara Sarma mentioned in their inscriptions were stated to be "Yama niyamasvadhyaya sampannabhaya".

From the description of Madhavavarman IV as "Vidvadvijaguru vipra viridha tapasvi janasrayah" it can be deduced that the Vishnukundins loved learning and they showed exclusive devotion of the brahmin religion and learning. During the rule of Vishnukundins Sanskrit and Telugu languages were encouraged. The language of the Vishnukundin records is simple, chaste and direct and are almost free from errors.²¹

The early Sanskrit records of south-eastern Deccan are written in prose. They are not composed on special occasions like erection of temples or other edifices and are not to be classed with Gadya kavyas. But that the writers of these records were not unfamiliar with the artificial style of Sanskrit prose is proved by the ojo-guna of the records. Reference may be made to the description of Madhavavarman I in the family of the Vishnukundins. The Chikkulla grant describes him with seven epithets, the longest having no less than fifty five syllables. The longest epithet describing Madhavavarman in Ramathirtham plates contains as many as forty nine syllables.²²

Most of the Vakataka grants are written in elegant Sanskrit prose.²³ So it is not unreasonable to think that the influence of the Vakatakas was there on the Vishnukundins in respect of poetic style in writing the inscriptions.

A treatise on Telugu prosody by name Janasraya Chandovichitti was brought out probably by the king Madhavavarma IV who bore the title of "Janasraya". It appears that this was written by a scholar named Ganasvami in the form of a commentary. The king Janasraya is praised in the introductory verse of this work, as having put down all his enemies to have performed many great sacrifices. The book is incomplete. It is a treatise on the poetry in Telugu language during the time of the king. This book written in the name of the king Janasraya, contains detailed study of Gana, Yati, and Prasa pertaining to Telugu poems. In the 5th Chapter of this book, prosody on different varieties of prose and poetry in Telugu language that was in vogue in those times was detailed by one Ganaswami. He praised the contemporary books on Telugu prosody. The slokas (stanzas) of Kalidasa, Vararuchi, Sundarapandya, Sudraka, were quoted by him in Janasraya Chandovichiti. All the poets that were mentioned in this book lived prior to sixth century A.D. The poems mentioned in the 5th chapter of this book belongs to different categories and Seershika is one of them. This seershika is of seven types. This resembles the present poem of 'Seesa' in Telugu, Seershika must be the old form of present. Seesa, (Seershika-Seesaka-seesa). The remaining types of poems in this book

are also in accordance with the prosody of Telugu literature. 'Dvipada' and Tripada also were dealt with in the treatise. Several books have been written in Telugu language in 'dvipada', in later periods.

One modern writer²⁴ has aptly said that Janasraya Chandovichiti is one of the early works entirely devoted to the Sanskrit metrics and that such a work might not have been produced in the land and the age barren of literary activities, the presence of which alone could demand such a treatise.

The foregoing facts go to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that Telugu flourished in 5th and 6th centuries A.D.²⁵ under the patronage of Vishnukundins. The label 'Tolachuvanru' in archaic Telugu found at Keesaragutta strengthens the view that Telugu language flourished in Telangana region and then extended to the other parts of the Andhra country.

In Chikkulla plates Indrabhattarakavarma was described as "Yathavidhi viniryaapita ghatikavapta-punya - sanchaya" the king obtained religious merit by establishing ghatikas as ordained by law. Opinion differs regarding the derivation of the word ghatika. Dr. Kielhorn²⁶ considers that it is synonymous with goshti and understands it to mean an assembly of the learned brahman scholars.

Dr. C.Minakshi²⁷ derives ghatika "from the sanskrit root ghat, which means to be busy with 'to strive after', 'exert oneself for', 'be intimately occupied with anything',

and understands it to mean "the place or institution where scholars and students strove for knowledge. Dr.N.Venkataramanayya²⁸ asserted that the word Ghatika denotes an educational institution. Ghatikas are known to have existed during the time of the Vishnukundins and for several centuries after them in Andhra and other parts of South India. It is evident from the Chikkulla plates that the establishment of a ghatika was regarded as a pious act which had to be performed according to certain regulations prescribed by tradition and law.

The establishment of the ghatika was regarded as a meritorious act which secured happiness to its founder in heaven. The Tundi copper plate grant of Vikramendra II, declared that his father Indrabhattaraka acquired brahma-punya, that punya which enabled him to attain the brahman status by the foundation of the ghatikas.²⁹

The Trairajya ghatika at Kanchipuram, the most ancient institution of its kind in the south was founded by the Pallavas, and it flourished under their protection during the six centuries of their rule. Narasimha II known as Rajasimha spent much of his wealth on Gods and Brahmans and revived the ghatika in his capital.³⁰ The Vishnukundin monarchs also must have fostered the ghatika in their kingdom in the same manner. Ghatikasthana was an educational institution of the residential type in which provision was

made not only for the boarding but also for clothing of its members including teachers and pupils.³¹ The ghatika is an institution, the establishment of which is governed by certain rules said to have been laid down in the Vedas.³²

It may also be concluded that ghatika denoted educational institution where the knowledge of the Vedas was imparted to the Brahmins.

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PART - II

I. SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Land and the man are the true foundation of the history of any country. The actions of man have their first cause in the nature of the land in which he lives, and history is the record of his attempts to satisfy his evergrowing needs, both on the material and spiritual plane. The physical features of Andhra Desa, its mountains, rivers, climate and forests have a great influence on human character and largely determine human action.

Andhra Desa covers a wide expanse of territory which presents infinite varieties of soil and scenery. Wide downs, rolling plains smiling with harvest, fantastic tors and logans, luxuriant forests, rivers tumbling over precipices and leaping in wild water falls, and streams foaming in wild torrents along with rugged rocky beds, combine in one superb panorama the varying aspects of awe and beauty. Alluvial tracts added to the natural wealth of the country.

Walls and rock that crown many of the hill-tops were easily turned into impregnable fortresses.

Archaeological excavations and explorations conducted by the Department of Archaeology, ^{Andhra Pradesh} ~~A.P.~~, in the recent years have revealed evidence of human habitation belonging to the early historical period particularly of the Vishnukundin period at (1) Yeleswaram in Nalgonda district (2) Keesaragutta in Rangareddy district (3) Tummalagudem in Nalgonda district (4) Gollathagudi; (5) Gummadam in Mahaboobnagar district

(6) Rajahmundry in East Godavari district; (7) Vijaya^{wa}da in Krishna district and (8) Veerapuram in Kurnool district.

1) Yeleswaram:-

Yeleswaram is situated on the bank of the river Krishna in the Devarakonda taluk of the Nalgonda district. The village is located in a valley, covering an area of 13 square kilometres and is contiguous to the Nagarjunakonda valley. These two valleys form a ring of hills cut into two halves by the river Krishna.

This valley is relieved by small hillocks with precipitous hills surrounded on all sides and the swift flowing river Krishna serving as a means of both defence and transport. The picture-squ~~are~~ landscape and the natural setting of the valley caught the attention of the pre-historic man who settled down here before the dawn of civilisation as evidenced by stone tools left by him and it remained a cradle of culture in the early and medieval historical periods. Vast and varied remains have been encountered belonging to the late Satavahanas, Pallavas, Vishnukundins, Chalukyas and many other dynasties that followed in succession right upto the late medieval period or even modern times. A large scale excavation was undertaken during the period 1960-1965 as this valley was threatened with submergence under the waters of Nagarjunasagar Dam across the river Krishna.

Excavations laid bare several distinct occupation levels lying one above the other and exposed a whole phase of human society teeming with life.

The first civilised people who settled here were megalithic folk whose burials were encountered nearly 3.09 to 3.68 metres below the surface.¹ The historical period witnessed building construction activity. The excavation yielded a rich crop of minor antiquities such as terracottas, iron implements, potsherds both designed and decorated, chaitya shaped sprinklers, highnecked vases, bangles, stucco, coins etc., which shed enough light on the culture milieu of different periods.

In a small pot, a hoard of 49 coins of Vishnukundin dynasty was found which had on the obverse a rampant lion and on the reverse two hanging lamps etc. This clearly proved that the direct successors of ^{the} Ikshvakus in this valley were the Vishnukundins.²

During the early part of this period dull redware of Ikshvaku period continued but the grey ware emerged and predominated this pottery. The important finds of this period consisted of beads, terracotta, figurines, stuccos and glass bangles, iron slags, iron nails, stapplers, finials, stone pots, etc. Some votive saivite shrines were found associated with layer 4 which is assigned to Vishnukundin period. Layer 4 cutting I consisted of ritty earth mixed with white pellets and brick bats, layer 4 - cutting II - contained rubbles, brick bats and gravel mixed with sand. In this period an enclosure wall was brought to light. Brick structures continued in this period and was installed with Banalinga connected by an abhiseka drain.

The spade of the archaeologist brought out a good number of implements, representing various activities of the people in agriculture, building construction, warfare and other household objects. The emergence of the historical period marked the maximum use of iron and ^{the} Vishnukundin period particularly yielded a large quantity. The iron implements could be classified broadly under four categories namely (1) Building materials (2) Agricultural implements (3) Implements of war and chase (4) Household objects.³

2). Keesaragutta:-

Keesaragutta is about 40 kilometres from Hyderabad which is a great Saivite centre from times immemorial. The name Keesaragutta might have derived from Kesarigiri a hill of lions or lion hill.⁴

Physical features of Keesaragutta and its surroundings.⁵

The district is mostly hilly, and thickly wooded, known as the Rajkonda range and the Anantagiri range of hills which is composed of high-level laterite across the district. Isolated granite hills are seen every where. The slope of the land is from west to east and south-east. The geological formation is of the Archaean gneiss. Tors and boulders of fantastic shapes are seen everywhere, composed of basalt and granite piled up in picturesque confusion.

The most important river of the district is Musi which rises from Anantagiri hills near Sivareddipet and flows almost due east; it joins the Krishna river near Vadapalli in Nalgonda district.

FLORA AND FAUNA

There are two protected forest tracts in the district where certain kinds of good timber viz. teak, ebony, and nallamaddi are available. Unprotected forest tracts exist in all parts, consisting of ghairi or common wood used as fuel and also for thatching and wattling, low scrubby jungles give cover to leopards, bears, hyenas and occasionally tigers, while in the more open plains antelopes abound. Partridges, quail and wild pigeons are very common, and in the tanks and rice fields wild duck, teal and snipe are plentiful in the winter.

Climate and Rainfall:

The climate is salubrious and equable, exempt from the fierce heat and severe cold of the north and the depressing influences of the coast. However, the numerous tanks and streams make the climate somewhat damp especially during the rainy season. The temperature during the winter and summer seasons stands at $13^{\circ}9'$ and 39.8° centigrade respectively. The average rainfall of the district is about 90.68 cms. or 35.7 inches. The district receives rains both from the south-west and north-east monsoons mostly from the month of June to August but occasionally in September, October and November also.

Geological Setting:⁶

Archaeans:

The prevalent rock belonging to this group is known as "The Peninsular Granite Complex" which includes a variety of granites polyphiritic, equigranular, massive, banded and

streaky. Depending on the colour of felspar two types of granites ^{are} ~~and~~ recognised one pink and the other grey, but there is gradation from one to the other. Rocks are usually coarse to medium grained and wide variation is seen regarding their textural features. The most common minerals are quartz, felspar ferromagnesian minerals which include biotite, hornblende and epidote, where as magnetite, apacite, zircon, sphene, allanite and pyrite, occur as accessories. The granites are traversed by numerous quartz and pegmatite veins and basic dykes, which vary in size considerably from small veinlets to large roofs. The basic dykes stand out prominently as ridges trending in east-north-east, west-south~~west~~ or north-north-east, south-south-west directions and range from 30 metres to several kilometres in length. These are either deleritic or basaltic in composition, consisting of plagioclass felspar and antige.

Bhimas:

Rocks younger than the Archaeans but older than the Deccan traps are represented by the sedimentary rocks known as the Bhimas. These include grits, sandstones, shale and lime stones. These overlies the granites unconformably with coarse gritty and pebbly sandstones at the base, succeeded by shales, lime stones. The shales are olive green, drab or purplish in colour and the limestones are grey cream coloured and flaggy.

Deccan Trap:

Lava flows known as Deccan traps cover a considerable portion of the district, concealing part of the Bhimas as well as the archaeans. These traps are formed by the solidification

of lava extruded through fissure like eruptions in the older rocks. As the flow of lava was intermittent, there are several layers or flows of the rock, the individual layers differing slightly in texture and thickness. They are mostly fine to medium grained, dark grey to almost black in colour and consist of plagioclase felspar and augite. Some of the layers of the traps are scoriaceous due to escape of gases through the lava before it was fully consolidated. The scoriae or cavities in such rocks were later partly or wholly filled by secondary minerals, like zeolites, calcite and various forms of cryptocrystalline silica, such as chalcedony agate, onyx, jasper etc.

Laterite:

Laterite is a product of tropical alterations suffered by some rocks and is developed typically in the tropics. It is a porous, pitted, clay like rock with red, yellow, brown, grey or mottled columns depending on some measure on the composition.

Mineral Resources:

The district is gifted with deposits of clays, felspar, quartz, kankar, laterite, ochre. Granite is quarried extensively for use as building and constructional material. The granites of the district provide excellent building stones. The granites in the pink and grey shades are capable of taking high polish.

Kesaragutta about 90 metres high from the plains with a flat and undulated area over the top of the hills extending from 3 to 4 square kilometers was enclosed by a fort wall now

defunct. The fort was provided with four main gates to stop direct onslaughts of the enemy forces. Some water gates were also provided near the water pools for fetching water into the fort. As there are no perennial sources of water such as a river or streams in the vicinity, the natural depressions at the gradients were cross-bunded during the Vishnukundin period to store rain water. There is a huge tank at the foot of the fort on the west which must have served both as a source of drinking water and as a deep water hurdle for the protection of the fort. Entire fort is studded with remains of brick structures.

In the course of excavations at the palace complex many Vishnukundin coins of a squatting lion with a spirralled tail and raised fore-paw on the obverse, a poornaghata flanked by two lamp-stands all enclosed in rayed circle on the reverse were found. Besides, beautifully modelled human and animal stucco figurines used for decorating the walls of the building were also recovered. The pottery was red polished, brown polished and dull redwares. The collection also included a few necks of sprinklers and spouts of red polished vases. The other antiquities were shell bangles, beads of semi-precious stones, a stone plaque of Mother goddess, and a decorated globular pot, and a human skeleton in inverted position found under the fallen bricks.

The massive style of architecture of the multi-storied secular buildings and the decorative features indicate that it was the palace complex of Vishnukundin period, protected by a secondary fortification wall of rubble which encompasses

an approximate area of 1 Sq.Km. the outer and the inner defensive fortification walls, the numerous religious and secular structures inside the fort, the coins, the pottery and other finds, all datable to the Vishnukundin period are evidences enough to prove that Keesaragutta was a centre of human activity in the early Christian era. It can also be deduced that the people settled in and around Keesaragutta during the times of Vishnukundins in view of the historical, political and religious importance of the region in those days.

More details regarding the finds of Keesaragutta excavations are given in the following chapters.

3) Tummalagudem:-

Tummalagudem is a village in Ramannapet taluk of Nalgonda district, ^{eight kilometre} ~~five miles~~ away from Ramannapet, on Bhuvangiri-Nalgonda road. There is a big tank near the village. The length of the tank bund is about 4 kilo metres. There are reminiscences of an ancient city on the banks of river 'Musi' extending upto the tank-bund near Tummalagudem. This extensive area is surrounded by fields. Ruined temples, votive shrines, brick structures, basements, show that it was a great city which flourished by the name Indrapalanagaram during the Vishnukundin period. North of Tummalagudem and adjacent to the river Musi there is a hillock called 'Indrapalagutta' extending one ^{km} ~~mile~~ in length and half a ^{km} ~~mile~~ in ^{breadth} ~~width~~. There is an ancient fort on this hillock belonging to ^{the} Vishnukundin period.⁷ This fort has twelve turrets. On the top of the hill there is a deep tank which is locally

known as 'Enugula Bavi'. Big sized bricks, stones, basements, walls, ruined rooms are seen near this tank. The fortification has gates and towers. A figure of priest carrying material for the worship of Lord Siva is carved on a huge boulder. On the back side of this hill there is a spacious mandapa supported by twelve pillars. There exists another Siva temple on the eastern side of the hillock. The linga is made of black granite the height of which is 60 centimetres.

In the vicinity of this temple towards east, there are ruined buildings; adjoining these ruins there is another Siva temple, with a tank to its north, flight of steps leading down to the Musi river. About 200 meters away from Indrapalagutta one hundred and one Sivalingas are seen, carved on flat rock in the Musi river bed.

The people of those times might have preferred the area for their habitation in view of the availability of natural water resources, cultivable fertile lands in the vicinity, abundant rain fall for agricultural operations, natural rocks, and other material required for building activity for secular, religious and defensive purposes.

4) Gollathagudi:-

Gollathagudi is situated about 10 kilometres from Jadcharla railway station on Secunderabad-Dronachalam Metre-guage line within the precincts of Alwanpalli village of Jadcharla taluk. Alwanpalli is situated about 100 kilometers from Hyderabad.

Excavations at this place, brought to light an early temple of Mahavira with a sanctum, antarala and Mukhamandapa foundations of two more temples with its lime plastered brick walls and the Mukhamandapa. Excavations were continued in order to expose the brick temples situated on the southern flank of the mound IV (Paddalagadda) and to clarify their chronological position in the general structural sequence of the site.

The details of the temples were completely obliterated for they were entirely ruined leaving the foundations in position. Three temple plans, all oriented east-west, were brought to light during the excavations. Temple I was built on a plan containing the Garbhagriha, a pillared mandapa and an entrance porch on the east. Temple III consists of a Garbhagriha and an entrance constructed in between these two temples. Temple II originally stood on a simple plan having a Garbhagriha facing east and a pillared mandapa with a northern entrance.

The excavations also yielded large number of stucco figurines which included human and mythical animals.

In the temple south-west of Padalagadda a Nandi carved in granite with head mutilated and decorated with band of beads with hanging bell around the neck, is found. The size of the bricks used in construction of this temple is 41 x 21 x 7 cms. This must be a Saivite temple of Vishnukundin period.

Redware pottery found here consists of storage jars, vases, vessels etc.

Though the entire area, where excavations were conducted, revealed only the temple complex, there are evidences of extensive habitation, half² kilometer away from the temple complex towards Alwanipalli village, where pottery like storage jars of coarse dull redware, vases, etc., were found from a deposit of two metres on the road side. On the other side of the Jadcharla-Devarakonda road towards south, pieces of redware pottery of early historical period are visible on the surface itself. The land is under cultivation of dry crops like Jawar etc.

~~These area~~ extends upto two kilometres towards south touching the western bank of the Dindi river a tributary of the Krishna which supplies water both for drinking and agricultural purposes. The river takes a curve near the outskirts of Alwanipalli village giving a picturesque view.

The climate is generally hot with moderate rainfall.

The soils of the area are (1) black cotton soil derived from Deccan traps; (2) Calcareous loamy soils covering the purana sedimentaries; (3) red loamy soil derived from the Dharwar schists and (4) sandy gneissic soil occurring in the granite country. The soils of Mahboobnagar mostly consist of stiff black 'ragur'⁸. Stony red soils are observed in a few parts.

Ancient workings for copper are found in the neighbouring taluks like Mukthal. Quartz veins with malachite stains were also observed in the vicinity.

The pink and grey granites of the area supply any amount of building material for heavy construction. The porphyritic granites take excellent polish and produce decorative stones in pleasing colours. The massive Narji and flaggy limestones yield good material for construction and pavement. The extensive quartzites of Amarabad plateau afford suitable material for construction and also for making grinding stones.

5. Gummadam:

Gummadam is a small village on Wanaparthi-Kolhapur road in Mahboobnagar district, a few kilometres away from the river Krishna. This is one of the villages which comes under the submergeable area of Srisailem project.

Excavations were conducted on the mound situated 1½ kilometres away from Gummadam towards east, brought to light a Saiva shrine constructed with bricks measuring 40 x 20 x 6 cms. datable to ^{the} Vishnukundin period. Linga and Panavatta are partly broken, and uprooted.

Pottery consisting of vases, lids, jars of coarse pale red-ware some of them washed with deep red, were recovered.

Animal bone fragments, terracotta figurines were also found.

Evidences of early settlements are noticed in this region. The region enjoys fairly good weather throughout the year. The bulk of the rain fall is received during the later part of the south-west monsoon period.

The main soil of the region are the chalk and the sandy soil. Black cotton soils are also found.

6) Rajahmundry:

Excavations were conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, A.P., at Rajahmundry on the eastern banks of the river Godavari near Chandrika mini-theatre to glean the vertical cultural development at the site. The archaeological site is situated on the banks of the river Godavari bounded by Chandrika theatre on the east, the river Godavari on the west, an elevated area on the north and a katcha Municipal road on the south. The site is actually located in the area of Chagalnadu pumping scheme.

The excavations brought to light very interesting stratigraphical and structural evidence from the site. The deposit exhibited 7 layers above the gravel. Layer 7 is the earliest occupational deposit. It indicates structural activity datable on the basis of pottery to 4th century A.D. A wall of bricks of the size of 51 x 23 x 7 cms. and 46 x 23 x 7 cms. exposed in the slopes of Godavari bund near the old steps intended for the bathing also belongs to this layer.

The foundations of a brick temple of two rectangular cells was discovered. The temple was badly ruined and no superstructure was extant. No presiding deity is found in the cella. The bricks used in the construction measure 30 x 20 x 7 cms. The bricks of this size were also used in the construction of contemporaneous wall running east-west, a few metres away from the temple on the north. Layer 6 is the earliest layer

of the site. Conspicuous change of pottery fabric is of some significance. A structure probably apsidal or round was found below the foundation of the brick cellas. The plan of the structure could not be exposed to view, since it was thoroughly superimposed by the cellas. The bricks are about 46 x 23 x 7 cms. ^{long} ~~long~~. The size of the bricks is generally assigned to the Vishnukundin period in Andhra Desa.

The fabric of black and red ware is profusely prevalent in the early historical period in A.P. The earliest layer which contains fragments of sprinkler necks, arretine ware, the other dominant redware sherds suggest a date that ranges between 2nd and 4th century A.D.

The layer that overlies the earliest one is associated with the remains of the temple complex that contains the brick of 46 x 23 x 7 cms. again suggest continuity upto a later date.

The earliest mention of Rajahmundry in any literature is in the introduction to the Telugu translation of the Mahabharata which was composed by Nannayabhatta in the reign of the eastern Chalukyan king Raja Raja Narendra. In this the town is called Rajamahendrapatnam and is referred to as the capital of the Eastern Chalukyan kingdom and the central gem of the Vengi country.

Geology:

Rajahmundry and its surroundings (hinterland) form one of the most interesting regions geologically, because of the variety of its formation. Trap rocks which are evidently the south-eastern most extension of the Deccan traps, occur on

both sides of the Godavari near Rajahmundry. The traps are greenish basalts containing amygdales with chalcedony and agate. The main interest lies in their showing a set of intercalated limestone beds.

There are in addition some limestones beneath the traps. The traps are overlain unconformably by reddish sandstone and conglomerates which in other places rest directly on the gneisses and Gondwanas. They vary from shaly sandstones to conglomerates; the prevalent colours are reddish, purplish and yellowish-brown.

Climate:

The climate is comparatively equitable and although it is very warm in April, May and June, It is never too oppressive during the rest of the year. More than half of the annual rainfall is brought by the south-west monsoon while a greater part of the rest occurs in October and November.

Forests:

The forest near Rajahmundry contains timber and bamboos. Some of the beds are highly ferruginous and have been used as sources of iron ore when an indigenous smelting industry was in existence.

Graphite is an essential but sparsely distributed, constituent of some of the members of the gneissic series. The different sandstones of the area yield good building stones. The limestones associated with the traps are used for lime-making.

7) Vijayawada:-

"Egypt is the gift of Nile" wrote Herodotus centuries ago. It can be said in a like manner that the hinterland of Andhra Desa, from Rajahmundry to Vijayawada is the gift of the Godavari and the Krishna figuratively the white and the blue niles of the Deccan. These two rivers have exercised, from times immemorial, a profound influence on the economic and the political life of the people of the Deccan and the two eastern Deltas.⁹

The period of Vishnukundin rule was a period of great building activity. A number of temples were excavated on the hill sides for the accommodation of the dieties of the Brahmanical pantheon. There is a group of Brahmanical cave temples in and around Vijayawada situated on the northern banks of the river Krishna. There are two caves in Vijayawada, five in the neighbouring village of Mogulrajapuram and five more in the village of Undavalli, about two miles away on the opposite bank of the river.

Vijayavada, Vijayavata, Vijayavatika, modern Bezwada, seems to have risen to great importance from the ninth century A.D. onwards. Its antiquity would be carried much further back if future discoveries should prove its identity with the Vijayapura of an early Amaravati inscription.¹⁰

"Bezawada" is mentioned in the inscription of 'Yudhamalla' found on a stone pillar in Malleswara temple at Vijayawada. This inscription belongs to saka 820 (898 A.D.).

In the inscription of Pandranga of Addanki datable to S.770 (848 A.D.) it was stated that 'Kandukur' was made as great as

Bezawada city. So it can be taken that Bezawada was a flourishing city even prior to the 9th Century. Cave temples of Bezawada Mogulrajapuram, and Undavalli further prove that people had their early settlements in these parts.

Besides the above monuments, the recent archaeoclogical excavations conducted on the top of the hillock Mogalrajapuram brought to light, a Brahmanical shrine built in brick belonging to Vishnukundin period. Vestiges of brick structures in complete ruins are also seen. A square plinth with large bricks before a votive stupa is also visible. Votive stupas were neatly carved over the surface of the living rock in bas relief are observed.

The 'U' shaped hill was found quite convenient to the builders to have a series of rock-cut shrines from end to end. Exploration of the surrounding area has brought to view carvings of early Buddhistic faith in the form of chaitya representations executed on the vertically cut ridges. Cave No. V which faces west is at the turn of northern end; it has a flight of steps at its extreme right leading to the terrace. Right from this point to the hill top the ridges were found cut down vertically for facilitating easy ascent and some times steps were carved out within the bed rock to make the access easier. The flat hill top at one place was found scooped out to a depth of 1 metre in square and circular shapes, which in all probability meant for conserving water. Some heaps of brick-bats scattered here and there deserve further examination.

A Vishnukundin coin, partially cut, bearing double 'ya' "卐" symbol in addition to a few red ware pot sherds were collected from ^{the} surface.

The climatic condition of the region is of extreme kind with hot summers and cold winters and may be classified as tropical. At Vijayawada the heat is excessive and unbearable owing to radiation that develops in the crest of Indrakeela mountains nearby. The rainfall of the region is unevenly spread and it is determined by the two monsoons it receives i.e. the south-west and the north-east.

The soils consist of three main varieties namely, the alluvial, the black-regur and the red-ferruginous types. Endowed with a rich variety of soils, the region occupied an important place in agriculture. Enormous mass of silt, which the river Krishna carries has in course of ages, been deposited in the form of a wide alluvial delta and every bit of the alluvial soil must have put to agricultural use by the early settlements in and around the river near Vijayawada.

Mineral Resources:-

The gneissose granite and dolerite serve as a good material for building construction.

8. Veerapuram:-

Veerapuram village is situated on the right bank of the river Krishna in Nandikotkur taluk of Kurnool district. Early temples and living floors of Early historic times have been brought to light during the excavations conducted by the Birla Archaeological and Cultural Research Institute, Hyderabad. Cultural succession from about 18th century back to 4th-5th

century A.D. has been established. An addition to the known pottery fabrics of the early historical period at the site consists sherds of the Russet coated ware. The crowning part of the mound consists of temples which are among the early brick built shrines in South India and the oldest known in Andhra Pradesh.

There is continuity of occupation here.

The climate of the region is on the whole quite healthy. The first three months of the year are usually pleasant and the wind blows with moderate force from the south-east. Very heavy rain usually falls over the region, the heaviest showers usually coming from the north-west.

Geology:-

Mostly shales, limestones and quartzites are found. In places about the right bank of the Krishna owing to denudation, these lime-stones come up to the surface. They are of a red purple colour generally purple always, and are at times seemed with pale turquoise green calcareous layers or thin bands of limestone. The actual limestones lie below the shales.

Flora and Fauna:-

The region is covered with very thick forests. There are extensive grassy level lands which afford pastures to the numerous herds of cattle.

The wild animals are found in the region.

Soil:-

The region is rich in regur a soil of a superior kind. In spite of inadequate rainfall this soil responds very well

to jawar and cotton. Minerals like barytes, clay, iron-ore, ochre and steatite are found in the area. It is well endowed with regard to building material etc.

9. Tellakunta:-

Tellakunta is on the motorable road from Sultanabad to Dharmapuri in Peddapalli taluk of Karimnagar district. The importance of the place lies in the fact that a hoard of Vishnukundin coins have been recovered in the past which have been examined and published by Dr. M. Rama Rao.¹¹

To the east of the village lies series of low lying hills, consisting of large quantities of iron-ore. A huge tank is situated on one of the hills. Surface exploration over the hills revealed some circular structures made of brick which are apparently remains of blast furnaces. Human habitation is not found on the top of the hills but for these furnaces. It is quite likely that iron ore was smelted insitu and exported as pig iron. As such, the place must have been a commercial town of considerable importance during the early historical period. Exploration over the neighbouring mounds revealed red-polished and dull-redware potteries.

The range of hills around Dongathurthi, Nandimedaram and Tellakunta consists of magnetite quartz rock. Iron ore in the form of banded magnetite hematite quartizite occurs in this area.

The climatic conditions are moderate. Red sandy loamy soil, familiarly known as Chalka soil, forms the main type

although large patches of black clay loamy soil are found scattered.

The sources of irrigation are tanks and wells.

The epidiorites form low hillocks and occur as sheets and dykes invariably covered by residual soils. By far the major portion of the region is composed of the peninsular granite complex, comprising the pink and the grey granites. Limestones are also available which are high in ^{calcium} calcium carbonate and low in magnesium carbonate. These can be used for the production of magnesia used in the preparation of refractory linings in metallurgical furnaces.

10) Nelakondapalle:

Nelakondapalle is situated on the Khammam-Kodad road some 26 kilometres from Khammam. At a distance of one and half kilometres from the village there are places known as Viratrajudibba and Kichakagundam claiming importance in the days of Mahabharata.¹²

The old relics and coins unearthed in an area within a radius of 16 kilometres and the supposed relics of the cowsheds of Sahadeva strengthen the belief that the place was noted as far back as the days of Mahabharata. Some Buddhist stupas also existed around this village.

Physical features:-

The village is lying between 17° of the North Latitude and 80° of the Eastern Longitude. The climate of the taluk is moderate. The average annual rain fall is about

40 inches. The soils in this region are of four varieties viz., (1) sandy soil (2) red chalka, (3) black cotton soil and (4) choudu. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people here. The two important rivers that flow through this taluk are the river Muner and the river Palair both of which ultimately fall into the river Krishna.

Khammam district is very rich in mineral resources, forest wealth and power potentialities.¹³ This district forms part of the Indian peninsula which is quiet stable, composed of geologically older rocks. The oldest rocks are the Archaeans comprising schists, amphibolites, dolerites, nepheline, syenites, gneisses and granites. The Gondwanas of this district were represented mostly by lower Gondwana rocks and partly by upper Gondwanas. Lower Gondwanas are represented by Talchir Boulderabad followed by Barakar sand stones, shales and coal seams and by younger Kamthi felspathic sand stones and grits of light brown colour with red clay bands and few lime stone beds.

Slates and slaty phyllites, argillaceous group of sand rocks is best developed and are the most wide spread rocks in the area. Sericite, biotite, chlorite and quartz form the essential minerals where tourmaline is an important accessory. Quartzites are of massive, fine grained recrystallised rocks, white, cream or purplish in colour. Occasionally iron oxide forms the cementing material. Dolomites and Dolomitic lime stones are fine grained, dark or cream coloured highly siliceous variety. These are economically important, since they contain deposits of Barytes in them.

There are vast reserves of dolomitic line stones within the pakkals. The district possesses various other mineral deposits though in minor quantities such as iron ores, graphite, garnet, kyanite, dolomites, corundum, slate, mica, soapstone, chronite etc., apart from the vast sources for building materials.

Limestone and marble deposits are occurring in this region. The reserves are not estimated but it is clear that they will run to enormous quantities.¹⁴ These marbles are found to give low porosity and absorption values and suitable for interior and exterior decoration and also building purposes.

Forests:¹⁵

The forests in the Khammam division lie mostly on flat and undulating ground. The hills are low rising to a maximum height of 1,300 feet above mean sea level. The forests consist of mixed deciduous species, characteristic of the Deccan peninsula. The main types found in the division are teak type, mixed type, satin type, anduk type and bamboos. The quality of bamboos is fairly good.

Archaeology:-

There is an extensive ancient habitation site very close to Nelakondapalle. Since the mound was dug away for removing pati earth, the strata were thoroughly examined. In the trial trench dug to a depth of half-a metre, black and red-ware pottery, clay beads, one terracotta human figurine, etc. were brought to light besides innumerable lead coins of the Ikshvakus and the Vishnukundins. During the course of

scooping operations, fragments or broken hands, legs and bronze knobs, terracotta figurines, coins etc., have been brought to light. In the nearby fields, marbles are noticed in abundance, in the course of ploughing. Four trenches were taken here, covering the mound where brick walls connected by rubble alignments were noticed. Stumps of columns of white marble and some decorative motifs are also noticed among the fragments collected in the course of exploration. About two kilometres North-East of Nelakondapalle there is a mound popularly known as Viratraja Gadda or Erradibba. This appears to be a stupa constructed with bricks. Evidences of two phases of habitation in the early historical ~~period~~ are seen at this site.

Nelakondapalle appears to have been a flourishing township of the Ikshvaku and ^{the} Vishnukundin periods.

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II. STRUCTURAL PATTERN

YELESWARAM

The historical period witnessed building construction activity at Yelawaram. During the excavations, stumps of columns of a mandapa were noticed throughout the entire length and breadth of the site. The trenches revealed the terminal point of the mandapa.

Below the Madhavaswamy temple, a stupa was revealed at a depth of nearly 1.24 metre from the surface level showing two distinct phases; below this stupa, vestiges of tyre of another stupa were noticed. The vestiges of stupa below and the above other structure in the same level could be safely dated to 4th or 5th century A.D.⁺

Layer 4 contained rubbles, brick-bats and gravel mixed with sand. An enclosure wall was brought to light in this period. A brick structure appeared to have been intended for some ritualistic purposes as sockets were made at regular intervals around a raised pedestal for the erection of wooden columns to support a canopy. By the side of this ritualistic import, iron nails, iron slags and copper moulds were also recovered. A brick structure, something like a chamber, was discovered in period IV which functioned probably as a votive shrine for installing a Banalinga.

Another brick structure of the nature of votive shrine installed with a Banalinga was found. The enclosure wall was renovated during this period in the same alignment and the structure referred to above continued in use during this

period and was installed with Banalinga connected by an abhishekadrain.

The most noteworthy finds of the period are the five miniature votive shrines about more than 0.90 M. in height found very near the temple complex. These shrines have a low adhishtana, flat kapota and vimana of 2 steps surmounted by a semi-circular Sikhara incised with an inscription, the characters of which resemble some of the inscriptions of the Vishnukundin period datable to circa 4th century A.D. It has a Linga on the vedi inside.

The other miniature shrines have the same architectural features as described above but, they contain sculptures of Siva as Ardhanareeswara, Harihara, Umamaheswara and also a linga on a vedi. All these figures are carved in deep niches serving as Garbhagriha.

GOLLATHAGUDI

The excavations conducted at the site has thrown fresh light on the successive phases of construction, styles and artistic appendices of the temples. The aim of the excavations was to establish the sequence of temple construction and to unearth the profuse art pieces that once adorned the lofty spires and inner apartments of the temples which give expression to the artistic taste and cultural tradition of the age.

An extensive mound rising to an approximate height of 4 metres, composed of loose powdery earth, brick-bats and juttied out stone slabs, etc., was partly excavated bringing to view the plans of two brick temples facing east. The respective

plinths constructed in brick and stone besides porches and other related structures were exposed in the next field season.

Phase I - Temple I:-

An extensive deep trench on a more stable soil that is hard morrum, revealed the large sized baked bricks, having a mud mortar-binding material in between, were provided intermittent footings to bear the dead-weight of the superstructures. The original ground level was then raised outside the temple by spreading morrum to a considerable thickness so as to arrest seepage of rain water into foundation. The walls over the plinth were built in brick with a system of bonding to which was added an other layer to give veneering effect. The surface in turn was rubbed down to achieve excellent smoothness, but practically had no purpose behind it except to adhere to the past tradition. The veneered layers being apart from the main core of the wall, began to widen in due course and the glazy finish imparted to it could not retain the lime plaster, and the applied stucco moulding for long, and thus exposed the brick work to the vagaries of weather, which finally led to the premature collapse of the temple. The short life of the temple can be inferred from a very thin representative layer that formed while the temple was in use. This thin layer sealed the layer of spread morrum and was superimposed by the actual fallen debris of the temple itself.

This temple being constructed in brick must have given ample scope to the builders for greater constructional possibilities, which is almost lost now due to its total collapse.

From the extant details available on plinth and off sets on the exterior wall, in which elegant designs were carried out, it can be seen that the necessary carved and ornamental details were chiselled out of the brick works after the walls were built. Necessary parts were left boosted for this purpose. The carvings were delineated over the joints meticulously to look as if the whole belonged to one piece. However, the builders significantly overcame the disadvantages of small units in bridging spaces by using stone for lintels, jams, sills, perforated screens, pillars, and their bases which received little ornamentation in the hands of brick-carvers, this adaptation of stone was extended to the plinth portion also in the subsequent phase of construction.

The temple was decorated with clean lime plaster applied repeatedly. Friezes of human and animal figurines, floral designs carried out in stucco over the plasters deserve a special mention. The stucco applications were painted frequently in bright colours super-imposed by red, green and yellow. These applique decorations and bright colours catch the imagination of an observer.

No less than the excellence of its elevation was the grandeur of its plan, comprising of garbhagriha adjoined by two accessory cellars on either side, a Mukhamandapa and a mahamandapa, with its porches. The mahamandapa was flanked by two unidentified structures on either side.

The Garbhagriha was roughly square on plan measuring 3.45 metres in length by 3.37 metres in breadth, with the enclosed walls now standing to a height of one metre. The

floor paved with burnt brick was found disturbed at several places. The chamber was entered by means of a rectangular door of pale brownish granite stone, which carried a weak moulding on the margin. On either side of the garbhagriha were two rectangular cellars measuring 3.35 metres x 1.80 mts. each separated from the Garbhagriha by a partition wall and entered through the Mukhamandapa. The entrances of these cellars were subsequently blocked by small squarish construction of brick blocks. The outer walls of which bear the dead load of the lost sikhara were solid and measured 3.20 metres in thickness. The back wall of the sanctum measured 16.15 metres on the outside. These walls of the Garbhagriha and that of the whole structure were very badly ruined and stood to a little height over the plinth. The Mukhamandapa measured 9 x 6.75 mts. It retained its northern wall to a little height whereas its southern wall was completely ruined. The remains of 25 moderately carved pillar bases in stone suggest that the roof of the mandapa might have rested on stone pillars which are now lost. On the northern and southern remains of the walls were found pieces of perforated screens worked out in the semi granite stone. These were originally fitted to the windows for admitting light and air besides being ornamental to the pillaster designed walls. In between the mukhamandapa and Mahamandapa there stood a partition wall with a door-way of 1.25 mts. width for entry.

The remains of the Mahamandapa were very few. However, the uniform distribution of the squarish pillar bases resting on the lime floor have given the clue that there in the past the temple had a massive pillared mandapa supported by atleast 36 pillars with four centrally arranged pillars, plainly carved, carrying flat vertical bands on each of the four sides, surmounted by a squarish abacus. Again this mandapa shows the traces of having perforated screens, carved in stone fixed in the northern and southern walls. The bricks used in the entire construction are of almost uniform size measuring 39 cm. x 22 cm. and 8 cm. on an average.

Temple-II:

This temple is called by the local people as Gollathagudi. An elaborate pit was dug out to lay the foundation. The foundation was laid in brick and the outer gap in the foundation pit was filled with loosely knitted courses of brick pieces clodded with mud and finally well rammed. The outer ground level was raised to the height of the rammed stump against the foundation and finally paved with brick-bats, just to arrest percolation of water into foundation and to provide a rough flooring over the ground, outside the temple. At a subsequent phase of its history, once again morrum was spread to raise the ground level for the second time and stone slabs were spread over the morrum all along the length of the outer walls to strengthen the foundation. These two phases of its history also proved in the decorative elements of the super-structure.

The wall over the plinth was constructed with a type of bonding to which was added another layer of bricks giving veneering effect. There after the outer surfaces of the wall were rubbed down to smooth finish to embellish with floral designs, pilasters, plasters and Chaitya arches. The tower is typically of southern order. The plain bricks before the application had linear paintings, gracefully drawn in lime. In the subsequent phase, represented by the second morrum filling, the temple was plastered with lime besides adding stuccos, the traces of which were encountered in the long longitudinal trenches laid over the mound.

This temple facing east was built on a plan consisting of garbhagriha and a mandapa. The mandapa was raised on 12 pillars which are now lost, except three stone pillar bases and the traces of this foundation, constructed in squarish brick stumps overlaid by a stone slab to bear and distribute the weight of the squarish pillar. Morrum was used to raise the level of the mandapa to lay lime-concrete floor of about 12 cm. in thickness. A massive retaining wall was constructed all around the mandapa, now traceable only at its foundation level as they were extensively subjected to brick robbery in the past. The gap in the foundation of this wall was filled with brick courses clodded with mud, as found in the foundation of the Garbhagriha thus proving to be a contemporary one.

On the eastern side of the mandapa at a distance of 4.70 mts. was a squarish four pillared mandapa each side

measuring 1.80 cm. The whole mandapa was lost including the pillars and at present, what can be seen is only the four foundation brick stumps. No stone slab was noticed on these stumps and probably the pillars erected over the stumps might have had a weak decoration in the centre.

Towards further east was encountered another similar mandapa, with the foundations of brick stumps replaced by stone bases. This might be of a later addition.

Temple-III:

This one and the temple-I look alike, since no appreciable difference was noticed in their plan and execution. However, the two phases found in the filling of foundations of temple-I of the mound were repeated in this temple.

The foundation was raised in brick giving proper fittings to withhold the dead-load of the structure at a subsequent date, the ground level was once again raised by refilling it with morrum overlaid by stone slabs all along the wall, to further strengthen to the foundations.

The Garbhagriha flanked by two accessory cellars was entered from the Mukhamandapa adjoined by a Mahamandapa with a porch to it. The Garbhagriha was squarish, measuring 2.80 mts. on each side, with a squarish pedestal at the rear end measuring 40 cm. in height and 1.55 mts. on each side. The mukhamandapa was raised on pillars, the evidences of which is now manifest only in the form of their bases. The Mukhamandapa was also raised on stone pillars, the remains of which were noticed in the form of their bases resting on a foundation of squarish brick stumps capped by squarish or sometimes

irregular granite slabs. The whole of the temple floor was made up of lime concrete mix. Regarding the pattern of wall execution nothing can be deduced now as they were completely ruined and the bricks ruthlessly robbed even from its ground level. However, the patches of lime plaster found in tact at one or two places below the ground level and the stucco pieces collected during excavation speak of the final decorative touches given to the exterior walls of the temple.

Temple IV:

Though brick was the dominant material during this phase, the use of stone was restricted to the foundation and plinth. The marked difference ~~is~~ in the execution of plan and that of erecting walls point to the change of techniques.

The foundations of this temple was laid in stone slabs which were made to rest on a stone boulder pack mixed with whitish natural morrum. The depth of this foundation is much less when compared to the foundations of the temples 1 to 3 mentioned above. These stone slabs and underlying stone boulders have afforded greater stability and load bearing capacity than the solid brick used in the earlier phase. The foundation pit after laying the stone slabs was filled with natural morrum to raise the ground level and strengthen the foundation.

The walls constructed over this stone foundation were in brick, but the coursing and bonding of the bricks were of the superior quality, in that the outer layer of brick course was also well bonded with the main core of the wall. The wall

surfaces were not so smoothly finished as encountered in the other examples, temples 1 to 3. This shows a marked development in techniques of brick constructions adopted in this phase.

On plan also this temple slightly differs from those of the earlier phase. It consists of a small sanctum adjoined by a mukhamandapa and a mahamandapa entered through an elaborate porch. The Garbhagriha measured 4.10 mts. x 3.30 mts. in size and had its centre, a brick built pedestal sealed by a flat granite slab which might have served as a base to the ~~and~~ idol. The Garbhagriha was entered from the pillared mandapa by means of a rectangular door, the jambs being fitted with massive granite stone, dressed moderately. The overall thickness of the enclosed walls ranged from 2.90 mts. to 3 mts. On account of the use of bricks the thickness was not always uniform and measured 40 cm x 20 cm x 7 cm. on the average. The chamber was paved with bricks which did not extend to the centre due to spoilage.

The mukhamandapa enclosed by a dilapidated brick wall of 1/2 mt. high was raised on 16 pillars the bases of which are still intact. The lime plastered floor was made up of lime concrete mix and finally it was plastered to achieve a smooth finish. The granite slabs fixed into the recesses of the external wall had prominent incissions on them for fixation of perforated screens into the grooves. The Alcha-mandapa and the mukhamandapa were separated by a brick wall having a passage for entry.

The Mahamandapa was ruined almost totally leaving only the foundation of the plinth on one side and the brick wall to a height of about half a metre over the plinth on the other. This was also raised on stone pillars which is noticed by the presence of the bases. It was floored in lime concrete mix which was finally touched with lime plaster. This mandapa was entered through a porch, the vestiges of which now consist of only a part of its plinth and a few stone slabs arranged inside to form a slab floor.

Temple V:

This temple was also constructed on stone foundations and plinth. The foundation rests on the second morrum filling this falling into the second phase, subsequent to the construction of the temples 1 to 3. The lowest slab of the foundation resting over the boulder pack was given dentitions on the under surface to provide grip and stability to the entire edifice. No foundation trench was traceable as it was constructed in between temples 1 and 3 in a spread of debris of the original two temples. A few centimetres gap between this temple and temple 3 at this lowest plinth level was compactly filled with lime concrete so as to check a possible foundation drift. This is more clearly manifested where a roughly hewn stone beam was tightly inserted between the foundation slab of this temple and brick foundations which was actually cut vertically for this purpose. The walls were constructed in brick well bonded. The brick wall of Garbha-
griha measures 7.55 metres on the western exterior and 5.75 metres metres on the northern and southern exteriors while the thickness

measures 1.75 metres. The Garbhagriha was slightly rectangular measuring 3.90 x 2.30 metres. At the rear end of the Garbhagriha were seen traces of brick pedestal construction intended to erect the deity.

A notable feature in the development of the plan of this complex of structures was found in this temple i.e. an antarala like ante-chamber was roughly 1.50 metre deep. The two circular pedestal bases on either side of the ante-chamber were probably meant for subsidiary deities. This practice was not unknown in the temples well developed on this plan. The mandapa of this temple lies in between the mandapas of temple-1 and temple-3. It is not known whether this mandapa had ever a ceiling like thing since no pillar bases were found erected in this mandapa. While the garbhagriha and ante-chamber were well floored with the usual lime mix concrete, this mandapa had no traces of such lime concrete but was plastered with fine lime over a paved brick base. This flooring might have been added subsequently. The outward decorations of the wall are not known with any certainty since it is in an utterly ruinous condition; only few lime plaster pieces were seen on the wall but the stucco pieces collected in the course of excavation from the debris, points to the lavish decoration made to catch the eye.

Temple 6:

This represents the latest phase of construction activity on the site. This phase witnessed complete departure of age old tradition of brick construction and shows a developed

plan with regular antarala which has been met with in an incipient nature in the second phase itself in temple 3. A change to maturity has been reached in stone carving.

A stone temple much restricted in size, had in it, all the necessary parts required for a temple. This was thoroughly ruined and now only the plinth and the foundations are to be seen in situ. The massive slabs, well carved outwardly on the traditions of stone work, were completely fallen from the plinth. Not even a single slab was in its original position to understand its actual form.

On plan this temple has a garbhagriha, an antarala a mandapa and probably a porch. The sanctum measures 8.50 mts. x 5.35 mts. It was floored with lime but the quality of flooring is much inferior to the floors of the earlier phases. Neither the pedestals were seen in existence nor any traces of them were left behind to glean the religious affinity. The antarala measuring 7. x 2.67 mts. was similarly floored. The mandapa measured 11.20 x 11.20 mts. Only one single pillar base in stone was found in this mandapa.

Temples 7 (a) (b) (c):

Three temple plans, all oriented east-west, were brought to light during the excavations. Temple (a) was built on a plan containing a Garbhagriha, a pillared mandapa and an entrance porch on the east.

Temple (c) consists of a Garbhagriha and an entrance constructed in between these two temples. Temple (b) originally stood on a simple plan having a Garbhagriha facing

east and a pillared mandapa with a northern entrance. The latter was subsequently added on the eastern side with an east facing mandapa raised on a stone plinth. Still later a flight of stone steps were given to the left side of the eastern entrance. Adjoining the added mandapa on its northern side was constructed a chamber on a stone foundation probably for housing temple properties.

The development of plans shows a unilinear pattern starting from a single cell and an entrance, passing through an intermediary stage having a Garbhagriha and mandapa, and an entrance porch, and finally culminating in a complex plan initially containing a Garbhagriha and mandapa and later added with an additional mandapa adjoined by a chamber and a flight of stone steps.

KEESARAGUTTA

An early Saivite temple of brick was brought to light during the minor excavations conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Museums some years ago. The temple is square in plan with a square brick pedestal in the middle to insert possibly a square based linga. Now, the linga is missing, but on the evidence of a covered drain on the north-east corner for conducting out the water of ablution and the floor inside the temple being paved with brick it must be a shrine dedicated to linga worship. This shrine is situated just opposite the western gate-way of the fort. Post-holes were noticed over the corners of the square pedestals, possibly to support wooden pillars. A running varandah and possibly

existed on all the sides outside the shrine, supported by wooden pillars based on granite slab pedestals. The granite slabs with grooves in the middle are found outside the temple along the walls at regular intervals of 2.01 mts.

A thorough exploration over the top of the hill revealed extensive fortification walls all around the hills encompassing an approximate area of 3 to 4 square kms. The fort wall was constructed of rubble and the superstructure was raised with bricks measuring 50 x 25 x 8 cms. Evidently the brick and the fortification wall with which it was constructed belong to the early historical period.

There are many brick temples scattered all over the area. The transition from brick to stone is clearly discernible in this place.

Structure I:

The recent excavations concentrated on the north-bank of the tank at the lower gradient of the Keesaragutta hill revealed a huge brick structure with five rooms prefaced by a rectangular hall, a square porch and flight of steps. The external walls are about 2 mts. broad and it is likely that a superstructure with 0.5 mts. broad wall, must have been raised. Considering the breadth of the wall it is likely that it must have been a multi-storeyed building. The flat roof made of rectangular terracotta tiles and plastered with lime was laid over horizontal rafters supported by wooden pillars, raised outside the walls.

Structure II:-

Facing this building on the north was found another elaborate flight of steps with a chandrasila leading to another building consisting of five rooms with a central hall. The entire complex was protected by a brick enclosure wall and connected by the flight of steps. This structure consisted of three rooms in two rows probably with a central hall of middle path-way. The building is situated on the extreme left of the steps and it is possible that a similar building must have existed on the right. During further excavations a series of trenches were sunk between structure-I and the compound wall with the aim of connecting structure-I and II and to find out the extension of the enclosure of the compound wall of structure I. The ground level to a length of 20 mts. was exposed which is the intervening space between structure I and the flight of steps noticed in the compound wall. The flight of steps, seven inside and four outside, have been provided for the main gate. The top step at the level of the door slab has two granite pedestals with sockets for possibly supporting the door jambs to carry a 'torana'. The steps are two metres broad and the descent has hand-rails. On either side of the steps are noticed heaps of lime concrete possibly stored for repairing the roofs of some buildings. The flights of steps have ended with Chandrasila on both the sides. The entrance of the ^aplace complex was raised to a height of 1.22 metres from the ground level. The devise was adopted to make entray into the palace a little difficult.

Inside the enclosure wall and exactly on the north-east of the structure I, another structure with multiple projections and recesses was exposed, a typical architectural feature of some of the buildings of the early historical period.

RAJAHMUNDRY

A brick wall on the slopes of the Godavari bund near the old staircase intended for the bathing ghat running from east to west is discernable. The size of the bricks used in construction of the wall is 51 x 23 x 7" and 46 x 23 x 7 cms.

The structural activity of the earliest period consists of the remains of a wall-like structure encompassing a circular construction in brick. The bricks used in this construction measure 46 x 23 x 7 cms. The plan of the structure could not be exposed to view since it was fully superimposed by the cellas of the later structure.

The layer that overlies the earliest one associates with the remains of a temple complex that contain the brick of the size of 46 x 23 x 7 cms. A brick temple of two rectangular cellas was constructed with foundations sunk into the underlying layer. The temple was badly ruined and no superstructure except the foundation is extant. No presiding deity is found in the cellas. The floor of the cellas is devoid of any kind of pavement. Eastern cella measures 2.3 x 1.7 mts. inside and 4.5 x 3.5 mts. outside. The bricks used in this construction measure 30 x 20 x 7 cms. Similar bricks were also used in the construction of a contemporaneous wall running east-west a

few metres away from the temple on the north. This wall must have been intended to close the temple, but its construction was abruptly stopped for reasons unknown. This incomplete wall is seen in bits in the same alignment, each bit having ends with successively receding courses. The bricks are bonded with mud in all the periods, use of lime could not be traced. Burnt bricks were used. They vary in size from period to period.

GUMMADAM

A mound situated about one and half kilometres away from the village towards east has been excavated by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, where a Saiva shrine belonging to 3rd or 4th century A.D. and a Jaina shrine surrounded by one enclosure wall are found side by side in east west orientation. The sanctum sanctorum is square in shape which is constructed with bricks of the size of 40 x 20 x 6 centimetres. Linga and Panavatta are partly broken and uprooted. The Linga is made of lime stone and there are no brahma sutras on it. Garbhagriha is 3.70 metres in length, stone slabs are used at the foundation level and the walls are constructed with bricks. The walls are 75 cm. in width and 30 cm. in height. The outlet is 1.45 cm. in length and 43 cm. in width. The length and width of the panavatta are 1.50 mts. and 15 cm. respectively. Antarala is 1.45 mts. in length and width of the wall is 75 cms. At the entrance of the antarala, broken shale slabs are present. The enclosure wall on the northern side of the temple is about 27 1/2 mts. in length. While exposing the structures of the

Saiva temple, another brick structure of an earlier phase is found on the top of the mound. The structure and the composite layer are formed and strengthened with loose morrum mixed with small pellets of gravel and sand particles. The underlying deposit associated with the structural level is formed with brick-bats and lime earth. The size of the brick that is used here is 40 x 20 x 6 cms. At a depth of 55 cms. pottery such as vases, lids, jars of coarse pale red-ware, some of them washed in deep red are recovered. The brick structure is built on stone slabs. A deposit of morrum is laid to the height of 15 cm. from bottom. The brick wall is constructed over a single brick projecting on the inner side of the cell; over this projecting single brick a brick wall is constructed to the height of 90 cm. The length of the outer wall is 3.60 mts. on all the four sides. Innerside of the wall is 2 mts. in length. On each side of the brick wall a brick structure is projecting outside at a distance of 10 cm. and at a length of 1.40 mts. on the brick wall in the centre of the wall. In the middle of the brick cell a basement is constructed measuring 1.10 mts. in length and 90 cm. in breadth, over the basement a deposit having morrum is raised to the height of 32 cm. and on this deposit a shale stone slab with a thickness of 5 cm. is placed. Probably this is intended for installing an idol, but the idol is missing now.

NELAKONDAPALLI

About ten Buddhist sculptures were discovered at Nelakondapalli in a private land while digging for patu earth. The pit where the idols were discovered was extended exposing the brick structures constructed with 46 x 28 x 7 cms. size bricks nicely lime plastered to a thickness of over 2.5 cms. In the course of the operation hidden and visible sculptural wealth consisting a number of broken fragments essential for moulding the broken idols were collected. Very interesting brick structures relating to the manufacture and preservation of the marble Buddhist idols were traced. A number of trough like structures measuring 4.45 mts x 1.96 mts. x 0.80 mt. ~~At~~three in alignment separated by a drain were also brought to light. A thick deposit of lime is noticed in the tub. It is quite probable that these troughs were intended for preserv- ing the idols under lime plaster and that they were subsequently given high polish.

The stratigraphy of the trial trenches taken in the mound has shown two brick structures one over the other separated by a layer containing morrum and fine sand. The first phase of the construction was made with brick, mud and mortar. A Ikshvaku coin containing the symbol of an elephant with raised trunk is found associated with this brick structure. The brick wall in the second phase was constructed with lime mortar. The flooring and the walls were thickly plastered with lime. A vishnukundin coin with lion on the obverse and A Kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse was recovered from this layer.

Fragments of pottery met with at the site include decorated and designed storage jars, water jars, and vessels of red polished ware and the fabric varying from coarse to fine. A beautiful terracotta human figurine with two horns on either side of head is found which resembles the horned dwarapalakas in the cave, and other structural temples of the Vishnukundin period. An excellent piece of 'Nandi-pada' carved on a lime-stone is also recovered in the fields along with other antiquities.

VIRATARAJA-GADDA or ERRAGADDA

After fixing the central point and dividing mound into four quadrants, two trenches were taken on the south-eastern quadrant and dug upto a depth of about 4.80 mts. In trench one the circular end of the Anda was traced and exposed to a depth of nearly 5.60 mts. and brought to light 52 layers of bricks. Each brick measuring 46 x 23 x 7 cms. In the corner of the trench under the baulk brick alignments in the shape of steps were noticed. About 1.40 mts. away from the circular end of the Anda an enclosure wall with a thickness of nearly 1.50 mts. was noticed. At a depth of 5.60 mts. a fine brick flooring was noticed connecting both the structures.

In the second trench regular steps in different stages were noticed buttressing the enclosure wall leading to the foot of the mound.

It appears that the enclosure wall served as a raised platform from where vertical steps leading to the Harmika are seen in the ^abulk. Both burnt and unburnt or half burnt bricks were used in the construction. The brick noticed in the topmost portion of the mound is red in colour fully burnt where as the Anda and enclosure wall were constructed of unburnt or half burnt bricks. These bricks are very brittle and easily dissolved in water. The average size of the brick also differed in both these categories. Hence it is quite likely that the stupa was conserved at a later date establishing two phases of constructional activity. Except a ~~red~~ redware pot no other antiquities were noticed in course of trial exploration at this mound.

III. ARCHITECTURE

A. RELIGIOUS

The Vishnukundin contribution to art especially architecture has hardly won the recognition it deserves at the hands of the scholars who devoted themselves to the study of Indian art and architecture. The Vishnukundins inherited the artistic traditions of both the Ikshvakus whom they succeeded and the Vakatakas with whom they came into contact, enriched them by their own contribution and transmitted it to posterity.

1) The Cave temples of Vijayawada:

There is a group of interesting Brahmanical cave temples in and around Vijayawada, situated on the northern bank of the river Krishna in Andhra Pradesh. There are two caves in Vijayawada, five in Mogalrajapuram and five more in the village of Undavalli, situated three Kms. away on the opposite bank of the river.

There is a long lozenge shaped hill at western end of Vijayawada near the barrage recently constructed. There are two sets of caves in the western slope of this hill. Of these, one is excavated at the foot of a projection of the hill and the other is 90 metres higher up and reached by a flight of steps.

Cave I:

This cave is rectangular on plan and consists of an open portico with eight pillars in the front with 'ankana' or

inter-columnal space covered by a low parapet ornamented with sculptures. Behind this there is a mahamantapa and an ardhamantapa, constituted by two rows of pillars. The back wall of the ardhamantapa is in the shape of concave curve and in the curved portion are excavated three cells at varying distances in the interior. These three shrines are separated from each other by two short walls projecting from the back wall of the ardhamantapa. The rock itself forms two walls at the southern and northern extremities.

There are four openings in the front part of the cave, two before the first shrine, one before the central shrine and one before the third shrine in the south. The low parapet which is in between these openings is in two sections. The outer side of this wall is sculptured all over. It seems to contain the figures of lions and standing deities. Further identification is not possible because the wall is much worn out.

Beyond the parapet is a row of seven pillars with corresponding pilasters in the northern and southern walls. Only the lower part of these pillars is visible. It is probable that like the pillars of the row beyond, these pillars are also cubical pillars without base or capital. The roof above these pillars is gone and there is open space now above these pillars. Beyond these pillars there is another row constituting the intervening space into the mahamantapa. In the northern wall of this mantapa are four niches, three of them empty and one containing the figure of Ganapati. This deity has four hands and holds modaka in the lower right hand on which rests the tip

of the trunk. In the next row are one pilaster in the southern wall and three pillars. The space between these pillars and the back wall constitutes the ardhamantapa, of the first shrine. There is a short projecting wall at right angles to the back wall. The rock wall to the south which is at right angles to the back wall contains a kosta or niche with the figure of a dvarapalaka inside it. This dvarapalaka wears a turban-like head dress with a horn protruding on either side of it. He stands in tribhanga leaning to the left. There is a big mace between his legs and on its handle rest his two hands. Above him are three individuals seated in padmasana. The short projecting wall on the north also contains a niche with a dvarapalaka, standing in vyatyastapada leaning to the right with his right hand resting on gada and the left in katihasta. There are four sitting individuals above him.

The back wall contains the entrance of the shrine in the centre and a makaratorana niche on either side of it. The portion beyond these niches is empty. Both the niches contain standing figures inside which are too worn out to be identified. Above these niches is a row of geese and above it the Kapota or cornice. There are three rafter ends above the Kapota. The wall beyond the makaratorana niches also contains the row of geese and the Kapota. The shrine entrance contains two pilasters, one on each side. The upper beam is decorated with a row of geese. Above this row is the moulded kapota. There is a row of lions above the kapota of both the entrance

and the side niches, four above each niche and six above the entrance, supporting the roof above.

The cell beyond the entrance contains a narrow antarala and the garbhagriha. There is a square hole in the centre of the garbhagriha intended for locating a linga or an image.

The second shrine is separated by two short walls projecting from the back wall, from shrines Nos. 1 and 2. Each of these short walls has a niche containing a dvarapalaka. The dvarapalaka in the niche in the wall to the south stands leaning to the left, wears a horned head dress and rests both his hands on a gada. The dvarapalaka in the niche in the northern wall stands in vyatyastapada leaning to the right and rests his right hand on a gada and presses his left hand against his stomach. The back wall contains the shrine entrance in the centre and a makaratorana niche on either side of it. The niche to the south contains the figure of a deity standing in dvibhanga leaning to the left with his left hand resting on the kati. The niche on the opposite side contains the figure of a deity standing in dvibhanga leaning to the left with his left hand resting on the kati. The niche on the opposite side contains the figure of a deity standing in vyatyastapada leaning to the right with his right hand resting on a gada and the left pressed against the stomach. The entrance of the shrine is similar to that of shrine No. 1. The cell beyond contains an antarala and garbhagriha with a hole in the centre of the garbhagriha. There are traces of nasikas or gables on the kapota of the shrine entrance.

The third shrine which is the north is mostly ruined. It is farther in the interior. The entire rock above this shrine has fallen and disappeared. The shrine entrance is closed by a brick wall.

Annexe Cell: There is a small single-celled shrine to the south of this cave temple reached by a short flight of steps. This is a plain cell with nothing worthy of notice.

Cave II:

This cave, locally known as the Akkanna-Madanna cave, is situated about 275 metres higher up and reached by a flight of steps. It is 14.75 Mts long and 8.95 Mts. broad and consists of an adhistanā, a flight of steps in its centre, three rows of six pillars each with corresponding pilasters forming an open verandah. mahamantapa and ardhamantapa and the back wall with three cells excavated into it.

The cave stands on an adhistanā which consists of upana, gala, jagati or moulding, patta, another gala and a plain kapota. The flight of steps in its centre has a chandrasila before it.

Among the pillars above the adhistanā the stumps of three pillars to the right of the steps and three to the left are seen. They seem to have been cubical pillars without base or capital. Like the pilasters at either end, they too must have had an octogonal shaft in between two massive rectangular portions. The pillars of the next two rows are octagonal throughout and have no base or capital.

The back wall contains three shrines with entrances projecting forward. The wall beyond these entrances is empty.

The entrance of each of three shrines is on a low vedi and flanked by an empty niche on either side. The entrance is surmounted by a kapota, plain and undecorated. Above this kapota are four beam heads and over them a patta supporting the roof.

There is a fine animal frieze on the beam between the last octagonal pillar in the north and the pilaster next to it in the first row. This frieze contains the figures of a lion running and an elephant walking with the trunk hanging.

THE CAVES OF MOGALARAJAPURAM

The village of Mogalarajapuram is now almost a part of the growing town of Vijayawada. There are several hills and these hills contain five caves which are of great architectural value.

Cave I:

This cave is the nearest to the town of Vijayawada and excavated in the eastern face of a hill and faces the east. It is 6.50 metres broad and 2.45 mts. high.

It consists of two rock walls in the north and south with open space between them. These walls do not have any kostas or niches. Beyond this open space there is a mantapa of three rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the northern and southern walls. It has a plain adhistana below. The back wall of the mantapa has a projecting part containing an entrance in the centre with a kosta on each side. Beyond the entrance is a shrine 1.83 mts. long and 91.5^{cms}_h broad.

The facade of the cave consists of a broad flat patta or band above the pillars in the front row. Above this band is a row of dwarfs in various poses. There is no kapota or cornice above this row of dwarfs.

The pilasters and pillars are cubical with an octagonal shaft in the centre and a curved bracket capital above. The pilaster in the front on the southern side contains at its base a Purnakumbha adorned with a cross ribbon. There is a horizontal beam above the pillars of the front row. On the northern part of this beam between the pillar and pilaster is a row of dwarfs in various poses and also a row of geese.

The back wall of the mantapa contains empty space at the extremities and a projecting portion in the centre. There is an entrance in its centre flanked by two kostas, one on each side. Each kosta has two pilasters containing in the upper half the kalasa, tadi, padma, idai and phalaka, and capital with the taranga or roll ornament on the underside. The northern kosta contains a peculiar dvarapalaka figure. This dvarapalaka stands leaning to the left holding a long sword or spear in his right hand and resting the left hand on a shield. He is in the vyatyastapada pose.

The entrance in between the kostas is reached by a short flight of steps with a chandrasila before it. The upper beam is decorated with a row of lotus petals. There is a kapota surmounting the entrance and both the kostas on its sides. It contains one nasika or gable over each kosta and two above the entrance. All the nasikas contain human heads inside.

Above the kapota are three rafter ends. The garbhagriha contains part of a vedi.

Cave II:

This is the largest and most beautiful of all the caves in this place. It is excavated on the northern side of a hill and faces the north.

This cave consists of open space in the front enclosed by rock walls in the east and west with two kostas or niches in the west wall. Beyond is a mantapa 9.55 mts. long, 4.65 mts. broad and 2.45 mts. high. It contains, in the front, two pillars and two short projections of the rock on either side dividing the front into three openings. Beyond these pillars is another row of four pillars with corresponding pilasters in the north and south walls. Beyond is the back wall into which three shrines, each about 1.83 mts. have been excavated.

The adhistana of the cave contains upana, gala, tripatta, another gala divided into compartments by short pilasters and a moulded kapota or cornice. Of the four niches in the east wall enclosing the open space, one contains the figure of Ganapati. This deity is seated with his left leg folded and resting on the seat and the right bent at the knee and hand rests on the right knee and the trunk rests on it. The left hand holds danta.

The facade of the cave is beautiful. The two rock walls, one on each side of the pillars in the front row, contain figures of dvarapalakas in the niches or kostas. The dvara-palaka on the eastern wall stands leaning to the left with his left hand resting on the tip of a gada and the right

resting on the kati or waist. He wears a horned headdress. A long snake starts on his right hand, and stretches across the chest and its hood emerges out of the left shoulder. The dvarapala on the western wall stands leaning to the right with his right hand resting on a gada and the left resting on the waist. At the end of each of these two short walls there are pilasters. Between these pilasters are two massive pillars with octagonal shafts in the centre and curved bracket capitals above whose underside is adorned with the taranga or ro^l ornament with a plain band or patta in the centre. Above the pillars the prastara is plain. Above the prastara is a moulded kapota adorned with three nasikas or gables surmounted by simhalalatas. Each of these gables has a lotus scroll on either side at the bottom. ~~These gables has a lotus scroll~~ on either side at the bottom. These gables are located above the openings below. The nasika on the east contains three heads, representing Brahma; the central and western nasikas contain two heads each representing Siva and Vishnu with their consorts. Above the kapota there is a broad band containing a row of animals, five lions with tails curled above, one elephant and one bull all in vigorous poses. Above this animal frieze is a fine figure of Siva as Nataraja with the portion below the waist broken. This deity is represented as dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmarapurusha. He has eight hands.

There are a few sculptures on the pillars and pilasters of this cave temple. There is fine representation of Siva dancing

on the pilaster adjacent to the rock wall on the east. Standing with his legs apart, this deity has two hands, the right stretched to the right side in kakihasta and the left bent at the elbow and placed on the left side of the chest adjacent to the arm pit. Jatas emanate from the head alround. There is a representation of Gajendramoksa on the first pillar in the front row to the east. To the left is the elephant yelling out, with its trunk upraised and the makara catching its right hind leg. To the right is Vishnu flying on Garuda, with two hands, one resting on the head of the elephant and the other upraised in vismaya. On the south face of the second pillar of the front row there is a sculpture showing Putana suckling Krishna. There is a wronout female figure on the west wall at right angles to the back wall of the mantapa to the west.

In the back wall of the mantapa are excavated three shrines each with a projecting entrance. Each entrance is on a raised base on which are two pilasters with the entrance between them. The entrance of the central shrine and the vedi below project a foot further. All the three entrances are surmounted by kapota, or cornices which are plain. There are two rafter ends above the kapotas of the side shrines and four above the kapota of the central shrine.

Cave III:

This is a simple and plain cave temple situated about a hundred metres higher than the road level and reached by a flight of rude steps cut on the side of the hill.

This cave consists of two crude pillars without base or capital in the front with short walls on either side. The mantapa beyond is 5.56 mts. long and 6.00 mts. broad. There is a single cell in the back wall of the mantapa 2.31 mts. long and 2.23 mts. broad.

The facade of the cave consists of a narrow flat patta or band above the two pillars. There is no kapota above.

Cave IV:

This is a small single celled cave facing the south and dedicated to Durga. It consists of two rock walls in the east and west in the front and two pillars beyond with corresponding pilasters. The mantapa beyond is 4.6 mts. long and 3.9 mts. broad. There is a cell 1.8 mts. square in the wall.

The pillars are plain and cubical with octagonal shafts in the centre and with no base or capital. Above these pillars are two plain pattas or bands. These are surmounted by a moulded kapota or cornice and adorned with three empty nasikas or gables with spade-head tops. Above the kapota are two bands with four rafter ends between them.

The entrance of the cell is reached by a short flight of steps with a chandrasila before it. The wall on either side of the entrance is plain. The back wall of the cell contains a shallow niche in which there is a half relief figure of Durga sculptured. This deity stands facing the right with her right foot resting on a small stool and the left stiff and resting on the ground. She has four hands, the upper right

holding trisula, the lower right resting on the bent knee and the lower left in katihasta. The upper left hand is wronout. There is a low rectangular platform below this niche.

There are two niches to the west of this cave of which one is empty and the other contains the standing figure of Vishnu with four arms. There are five niches in the east wall. These contain the sculptured figures of Siva with four hands dancing on the ^oprstrate body of the apasmarapurusa. Brahma with three heads and four hands holding kamandalu, aksamala and pustaka, another standing figure, a representation of Vishnu standing with samkha and chakra in the two upper hands, gada in one lower hand and the other lower hand in katihasta and a figure of Ganapati with the head of a real elephant.

Cave V:

This is a triple celled cave facing the north. It has two short projecting walls on the east and west, and two cubical pillars without bases or capitals with short projection rock walls on the sides forming three openings. The mantapa beyond 8 metres long and 1.67 mts. broad. There are three cells in the back wall each 2.28 square. The entrances of these shrines are level with the wall and do not project. The facade above the pillars has a low kapota or cornice without any decoration. Above it is a row of swans.

THE CAVES OF UNDAVALLI

There is a big four storeyed cave in this village and four more smaller cave temples.

Cave I:

This is the main, four storeyed cave popularly known as the temple of Anantasayi.

The ground floor of the cave is irregularly excavated and incomplete. Its ground level is varying and not uniform. It has a mantapa of three rows of six pillars each and one pilaster at either end. There are seven openings between these pillars which are all cubical and without base or capital. The facade has a low flat kapota or cornice containing an inscription in Telugu characters of the ninth century.

The first storey is in four sections from south to north and reached by a short flight of steps cut in the rock at the right end of the ground floor. At the top of this flight of steps to the left there is a rectangular niche in the rock wall and above it the railing ornament in three sections. Above is a frieze of two lions and one elephant in vigorous poses. The first section is opposite the flight of steps. It has in the front an open space between two rock walls on the north and south. There is a niche in the north wall adorned with the railing ornament. On the south wall opposite there are two long inscriptions. Beyond the open space is a low adhistana with a flight of steps in the centre. Beyond these steps is a mantapa of two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters. These are cubical pillars with an octagonal shaft in the middle. They have simple curved bracket capitals. The back wall of the mantapa contains the entrance of a cell with a Kosta or niche on either side. Each niche has two pilasters

and a makaratorana above. There is a distended makaratorana above the entrance. The beam above the pillars of the front row contains a row of swans with their wings open. Above is the moulded kapota decorated with three nasikas or gables with a spade head top. Above the kapota are seven figures which are too worn out to be identified. Above these figures is an ornament in three sections containing three horizontal rows of rafter ends with two beam-heads between them.

The second section is to the north of section I and reached through an opening in the north wall. It consists of a mantapa with four rows of four pillars each with the corresponding pilasters in the northern and southern walls. All the pillars are cubical and contain the taranga or roll ornament on the underside. At the base of the second pilaster to the south there is the figure of a woman standing with the right leg bent and the right hand resting on the right thigh and the left hand held up in vismaya. Five pillars and two pilasters in this section contain the full lotus medallion on the rectangular block at the top.

The third section is to the further north and reached from section II through an opening in the northern wall. It contains a mantapa of two rows of two pillars each with four corresponding pilasters in the walls. All these pillars and pilasters have on their underside the taranga or roll ornament with a patta or fillet in the centre. Two pillars contain the lotus medallions.

The fourth section is in the extreme north and at a lower level. It consists of a mantapa of two rows of two pillars

each and two corresponding pilasters in the walls. These pillars and pilasters are like those in section III. There is an empty cell excavated in the back wall of this mantapa. There is an empty niche in the back wall of this cell with a low vedi before it. One pilaster contains the lotus medallion and two contain the figures of swans. There is a niche in the south wall at right angles to the back wall of the mantapa with a sculpture representing a male being seated with the right leg bent and resting on the seat and the left hanging. The left hand is on the left thigh and the right is bent at the elbow and upraised. There is a woman to the right and two to the left. A boy stands below before a Purnakalasa. On the rock wall to the south there is a fine miniature temple of the Nagara order.

The second storey consists of a pillared mantapa and an open portico before it. This mantapa contains six pillars and a pilaster in the south wall in the front row, a short rock wall projecting behind the first pillar in this row, six pillars and a pilaster in the north wall in the second and third rows and five pillars and a pilaster in the north wall in the fourth row. To the north of these rows of pillars there is a huge figure of Vishnu Anantasayi. There are three niches in the south wall. The outer or eastern side of the short projecting wall behind the first pillar of the first row contains the figure of a dvarapalaka standing, leaning to the left hand in katihasta and the left resting on a gada. A snake starts on his right hand, runs across the chest and emerges

above the left shoulder. At the end of the south wall there is a fine niche of two pilasters with a flat kapota above them and a solid nasika or gable surmounting all with a lotus scroll on either side at the bottom. On the beams above the front and second rows of pillars towards the northern end there are two rows of dwarfs opposite each other. The pillars in the front row are surmounted by a kapota decorated with ten Nasikas each with a spade-head top and a human head inside. Above the kapota is the series kuta, sala, kuta, sala, kuta, sala, and kuta. All the pillars of the mantapa are cubical and contain on the underside the taranga or roll ornament with a patta or fillet in the middle. They are adorned with many sculptures viz., a bearded sage, man playing urdanga, chauri bearers, Gajendramoksa, lion, elephants, Vishnu with Prithvi, Narasimha, Vamana and Bali, Trivikrama and Sita under the asoka tree. The open portico before the mantapa contains on its eastern edge the figures of three bearded sages and two lions. The image of Anantasayi found at the northern extremity of the mantapa is hewn out of the rock. It represents Vishnu as lying on the seven coiled body of Sesa with the hoods spread above his head. The deity keeps the right hand folded at the elbow under the head and holds up the left hand also bent at the elbow in vismaya. There is a man at the feet of the god sitting on his knees and keeping his hands in anjali. Beyond the feet of the God are the two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha. On the wall are to be found the figures of Brahma with four hands seated in padmasana on a lotus and

of four other flying gods keeping their right hands in vismaya. On the back wall of the mantapa are the figures of the Vaisnava ^{devotees} ~~gods~~ and a fine figure of Vishnu seated in padmasana on Sesa. He holds sankha and chakra in the two upper hands and keeps the lower hands in abhaya and varada.

The third storey contains a narrow open space and a wall to its west decorated with ten pilasters. Two simple plain cells are excavated into this wall.

Cave II:

This cave temple is to the south of the main cave. It contains two plain empty cells and a frieze of two lions and two elephants above it. There are two niches above this frieze, and one of them contains the figure of Vishnu holding sankha and Chakra in the two upper hands, gada in one lower hand and keeping the other in katihasta.

Cave III:

This cave is to the south of cave No. II. It contains a single celled shrine. There is open space in the front, enclosed by two rock walls on the two sides a mantapa on a low adhistana containing two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the walls and two niches in the walls between the pilasters. The back wall of the mantapa contains a central entrance with a kosta on either side. There is a moulded kapota above the pillars in the facade decorated with three nasikas, one containing three heads, and another containing two. The heads in the third are worn-out. The pillars are cubical and without the base or capital.

The kostas in the back wall are adorned with a makaratorana with dwarfs seated on the necks of the makaras. There is a lotus bud above the torana in the centre. Inside the kosta are the figures of dvarapalakas standing in samabhanga with the right hand resting on the right hip and the left resting on a gada. The pilasters of the kostas are fully developed and contain the kalasa, tadi, padma, idai and palaka. There is a makaratorana above the entrance also and two human heads, one on either side of its central projection.

Cave IV:

This cave is situated to the north of the main cave and reached by a narrow pathway cut in the hill side. It consists of open space in the front enclosed by rock walls on the sides, a low adhistana, a mantapa with two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the walls and the back wall containing a shrine entrance with a kosta on either side.

All the four pillars are cubical and have curved bracket capitals. The two pillars and pilasters in the front contain sculptures which are much wornout. There is the lotus medallion on two pilasters in the interior.

The kostas in the back wall have distended makaratoranas above them extending to the sides and not hanging below. The kosta on the south contains the figure of a woman standing with her right hand upraised and the left kept in katihasta. To her left is another woman carrying a basket on her head.

Cave V:

This cave is also on the same hill but just behind the village. Its front has fallen.

This cave has in the front a wide open space enclosed by rock^walls on the sides each with an empty niche. Beyond is a low adhistana on which there is a mantapa containing two rows of two pillars each with corresponding pilasters in the walls. Beyond is the back wall with three shrines excavated into it. The pillars are cubical and have curved bracket capitals. In the northern part of the back wall there is a fine shrine with its entrance spanned by a makaratorana whose plume like part hangs below. The upper beam is decorated with row of geese. The architrave above the makaratorana is adorned with lotus petals. The moulded Kapota above contains at the ends nasikas with human heads inside. There is an elephant at each end above the kapota supporting the roof. The shrine to the south has a kosta on either side of the entrance containing the figures of dvarapalakas, with a snake emerging above the left shoulder. Above the kapota of this shrine there is a row of two lions and two elephants supporting the roof.

Miniature shrines:

These shrines are carved on the rock to the farther north of cave No.III. Two of them contain a linga on a yedi inside. One is on an adhistana having upana, tripatta another patta, gala cut into compartments by short pilasters, and a flat kapota above all. One shrine has a single pilaster on the sides of the entrance while the others have double pilasters.

Above the pilasters there is a moulded kapota without any decorations. Above this is a narrow patta or band with four rafter ends above. Then there is a wide patta and two narrow bands above. Above these bands there is the gala cut into compartments by four pilasters. One shrine has a plain Nagarasikhara and stone kalasa above. The sikharas of the other shrines are decorated with a nasika or gable with spade-head top. Inside the nasika are two pilasters with a beam head between them.

~~Dr.~~ G.J. Dubreuil¹ has shown that the cave temples at Undavalli and Mogalrajapuram on the banks of the Krishna are Vishnukundin excavations, that the Pallava king Mahendravarman I, was inspired by a study of these to excavate similar shrines in several places in his dominions in the south. After a careful comparative study of the caves at Undavalli with those excavated by the Pallava king Mahendravarman I at Mandagapattu, Mamandur, Pallavaram and other places in the south had come to the conclusion that the latter bear close resemblance to the former in design and style, and that Mahendra who admired the Vishnukundin caves had similar ones cut on the rock around his capital Kanchipura and other places in his dominions.²

It is apparent that the Vishnukundin dynasty, having been contemporary to Vakatakas should have had opportunity of knowing the great achievements of these in the realms of architecture and sculpture. A southward flow of Vakataka architectural traditions from Ajanta to the lower Krishna

valley due mostly to the intimate dynastic relationship between the Vakatakas and the Vishnukundins is quite possible. The intense devotion to Brahmanism of the Vishnukundins is also vouched by many of the kings like Madhavavarman I and III having performed Aswamedhas and thousand Agnishtomas and also by the entire family having been dedicated to the worship of the God Sriparvathaswami and this would make it appropriate that they be credited with the cave temples of Mogalrajapuram and Undavalli.

It has been suggested by early writers like Longhurst that the nature of the pillar, corbel, the cornice and the panel work in the cells, including the ground plan, and the dedication of the caves jointly to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva although establishing the primacy of the last mentioned in the Mogalrajapuram would imply that the work has the stamp of Pallava rock-cut architecture modes.³ Longhurst's view was proved to be untenable by some scholars.⁴

According to several writers⁵ the Vijayawada group of temples are of Vishnukundin origin and the main argument in favour of this theory rests on the following facts.

i) a number of copper coins found in the coastal districts containing the lion on one side and a vase on the other are attributed to the Vishnukundins.

ii) There is the figure of a vase or purnakalasa in one of the caves of Mogalrajapuram and of a lion in the Anantasayi cave of Undavalli.

iii) The seal of 'Ipur-I plates contains, in the upper half and above a horizontal line, the figure of Lakshmi seated on a pedestal flanked by a lamp stand by the Sun and the crescent Moon. The seal of the Ramathirtham plates contains the figure of a lion with mouth open, tail looped above the body and the left fore-paw raised. The lion found on the obverse side of the Vishnukundin coins is similar. This lion also resembles the animal found sculptured at the bottom of two pillars in the second storey of the main cave temple at Undavalli.

A fine purnaghata is found at the base of one of the pillars in a cave at Mogalrajapuram. It is then clear that the copper plate grants containing the figure of the lion on the seal, the coins containing the figures of the lion and kalasa and the caves containing the figures of the lion and the purnaghata belong to one and the same family of rulers.

iv) The Mushinikunda grant of the Eastern Chalukyan king, Vishnuvardhana III, records the gift of the village of that name to a Jaina temple at Vijayawada by Aryamahadevi, the queen of Vishnuvardhana-I (624-642 A.D.). The grant was executed by the queen herself and the seal bears the well known epithet, Vishamasidhi, borne by Vishnuvardhana.⁶ This is a copy of an earlier grant made in the time of Vishnuvardhana-I.⁷ Among the boundaries of the village gifted, mention is made of layanamora cave which obviously refers to one of the cave temples in Mogalrajapuram. This shows beyond doubt that the caves were in existence for sometime before the foundation of Eastern Chalukyan rule and that they were familiarly known by

that time. The Vishnukundins preceded the Eastern Chalukyas as rulers in this region.

(v) On the top of the triple celled cave at Mogalrajapuram is a figure of Nataraja with eight hands, tampering Apasmarapurusha. It is a unique one and such a figure is found nowhere else including the Pallava cave temples at places like Mandagappattu, Mamandur, Davalanur etc.⁸ These caves must therefore be ascribed to the Vishnukundins.⁹

Most of the architectural features found in these cave temples can be traced to the architecture of the Satavahana period, or its representations in the sculptures of the period. Massive cubical pillars without base or capital and with octagonal shafts in the middle are to be found in Buddhist caves of Guntupalli in coastal Andhradesa. Many lime stone pillars of this type have been found at Amaravati, Bhattiprolu etc. Animal friezes are found on the anda or dome of the mahachaitya of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda and at the base of the half lotus medallions on pillars. The purnakalasa as a decorative device was widely employed by the architects of the Satavahana period.¹⁰

The frieze of dwarfs found on the beams of some of these cave temples, sometimes carrying a garland, is found on the mahachaitya of Amaravati.¹¹

The Vijayawada group of cave temples influenced considerably the architecture of the Pallavas and the Eastern Chalukyas.

Influence on Pallava architecture:-

i) Ornamentation of the cave facade with the Kapota containing nasikas found at Vijayawada, Mogalrajapuram and Undavalli are also found in cave temples of the Pallavas.

ii) Most of the southern caves of this period contain pillars and pilasters decorated with the lotus medallion and this feature is found in one cave at Mogalrajapuram and two caves at Undavalli.

iii) The Kosta adorned with makaratorana is found in the Dalavanur cave and many caves of the Vijayawada group.

iv) The Durga temple of the Kotikal-mantapam is suggestive of the Durga temple of Mogalrajapuram.

Influence on Early Chalukyas:-

Some architectural features of this group of cave temples are seen in the temples of the Eastern Chalukyan period found at Bikkavolu and Chebrolu. The makaratorana niches and entrances adorned with the kapota above are an instance to the point. The row of geese and dwarfs is also common.¹²

The front towers of the temples like the Huchimalligudi at Aihole and the Virupaksha and Mallikarjuna temples at Pattadakal built by the Chalukyas have representations of Natesa with many arms with a bull behind¹³ and reminds us of the figure of Nataraja (i.e.) dancing Siva, with eight hands, in the Urdhvajanu pose and tampering Apasmarapurusha, found on the top of the triple-celled cave at Mogalrajapuram.

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III. ARCHITECTURE

A. ii A) Brick Temples and structural temples

The origin of image worship and the construction of temples may be assigned to pre-Buddhist period or pre-Christian era in the absence of any clear evidence. The next phase in constructions goes to the Buddhist period upto 3rd or 4th century A.D. In both these types of constructions, brick was the main material which could be conveniently fabricated into the desired structure being cemented either with mud or mortar. Further, brick architecture was also an inextricable companion of stucco workmanship which was a clear precursor to stone sculpture.

The Satavahanas and their successors like Ikshvakus adopted the brick medium for the Buddhist Stupas, Chaityas, and Viharas from their very inception, as at Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Goli, Ghantasala, etc. The spurt that was given to brick architecture spread far and wide and became the common pool of Buddhist as well as Hindu Brahmanical architecture. The continued use of brick medium in the lower Deccan by early Hindu architectural pioneers, even with the admitted availability of stone as raw material of the requisite quality shows the influence of age long and customary use of brick by their Buddhistic fore-runners in the same region.¹ Thus the very earliest examples of Brahmanical structural architecture are mostly of brick medium.

Brick is the most ancient material for a sacred building. Bricks of large size and of strong texture were made in Andhra Desa from quite early times; the size of the bricks found in the excavations at Yeleswaram on the banks of river Krishna at the Satavahana and Ikshvaku levels was 56 x 30.5 x 7.5 cms. During the period ~~of~~ extending from the first to the 3rd century B.C. or still going farther back, the use of bricks for walls seems to have been quite common in Andhra Desa for both religious and secular buildings.

The Matsyapurana describes the possible forms of the Hindu temple and says that they may be built either of wood or brick or stone.² Bricks had formed "the body of sacrifice". Detailed prescriptions are given as to how to make good baked bricks and this practical knowledge gained by experience accompanies a "Smriti", a tradition by which the acquired technical skill became perfected.³ The act itself of offering had gone into the making of the brick. It is a rite of identification. The substance of the brick is its carrier, earth and fire are the elements which take part in it and help the sacrificer to build his sacrificial body.⁴

Bricks and stone are frequently combined in one and the same building.

Essentially the acts and rites in building the temple are sacrificial. One of the main sacrifices being the vastu-homa.

"Let him who wishes to enter the worlds that are reached by sacrificial offerings and the performance of religious obligations build a temple to the Gods, by doing which he attains both the results of sacrifice and the

performance of religious obligations", says Brihat Samhita.⁵ The body of architectural knowledge behind the short compilation of the Brihat Samhita is supported by the traditional science of architecture, vastusastra listed in the Matsya purana.⁶

The structure of a temple is a work of art and science. Their knowledge and practice are conducive towards the same end, the making of a perfect instrument whose sight and ritual use procure release.

The Hindu temple is built with the fervour of devotion as a work of offering and pious liberality, in order to secure for the builder, a place in heaven, which means a high level of inward realisation and to increase the religious merit of his near relatives. The temple is built as a work of supererogation, with the utmost effort in material means and the striving of the spirit so that the prasada attains and leads to the Highest point. He who builds a temple of Siva leads his ancestors of 21 generations to the world of Sambhu.⁷ To the pilgrim and devotee who goes to the temples, it is a Tirtha made by art, as others are by nature and often it is both in one. It is the seat, abode and body of divinity. In addition to being an offering and work of pious liberality, the temple has not only its proportionate measurement but also the carvings on its walls, and the total effect of its form.

The temple consists of thick walls and a roof forming a dark square chamber entered through a door with a more or less elaborate frame.

The Brihat Samhita⁸ and the Matsyapurana⁹ describe twenty types of temples. Amongst them Meru, Mandara and Kailasa are the first three names, all three are the names of the Mountains. Some inscriptions extoll the temple as the Mountain.¹⁰ In the geography of the puranas, the Mandara is the mountain to the east of Meru.¹¹ Kailasa, the abode of Siva, is situated to the north of Mountain Meru, or it is said to be one of its three peaks¹², so that either of these peaks, Mandara and Kailasa, is a part of Meru.

Sculptural representation:

The sculptures from Amaravati, Jaggayyapeta, Nagarjunakonda and Goli include a number of bas-reliefs where a variety of examples of architecture, both religious and secular occur. The types of religious shrines amongst them may be taken to give us clues to the fact that there actually existed then shrines of similar types in the open air. In certain cases secular buildings, shown in the bas-reliefs, such as palaces may also be seen to possess some of the details of a religious edifice, a fact which shows that during the early period there was comparatively greater freedom in the practice of the art of building.

The 'Punyasala' from Jaggayyapeta¹³, the harmikas surmounting the stupas and the Budhaghara from Amaravati¹⁴ are examples of shrines built on square plan ~~and there are shrines built on square plan~~ and there are shrines built on circular plans¹⁵. A number of structural chaitya-grihas have been found amongst the ruins of buildings at Nagarjunakonda.¹⁶ The

excavations carried out at Nagarjunakonda brought to light remains of a large apsidal structural shrine devoted to Siva who is called as Pushpabhadraswami in the inscription occurring on its dhvajastambha.

A peculiar brick structure of elongated beehive outline and with a Gavaksa, carved on its lower part, is represented in a relief from Amaravati. The Gavaksa is surmounted by a very tall finial of several components probably Amalaka etc.,¹⁷

A lead coin belonging to Satavahana king Yagna Sri of the last quarter of the second century A.D. shows on the reverse a beautiful design of a bow and arrow and on the obverse a three-stepped pedestal on which is placed a figure resembling a human head. It carries a three-pronged design. To the proper left of this head there is a tall-pillar. ~~The~~ the proper right there is a square, with a small opening at its bottom, suggesting an enclosure; within the enclosure is depicted a tiny little but beautiful bull standing facing proper right. This bull is of the type which occurs in early sculptures from Amaravati etc., as well as the type met with in the seals of copper-plate grants of ^{the} Salankayanas. All these figures as well as their arrangement appear to us to suggest clearly that what is meant here is a shrine. The trident head and the bull on the left show that here the deity represented is Siva. It leaves no doubt of the fact that during and earlier than the second century A.D., there existed Siva shrines of this type.¹⁸ In fact references to Siva shrines are met within the 'Saptasati' of Hala who is a ruler of Satavahana dynasty in the first century A.D.¹⁹

Examples of rock-cut shrines date from about 5th to the 7th century A.D. and the non-availability of material proving the existence of structural temples of this period does not suggest that no such temples were built then. Probably quite a number of them of brick and mortar, were built then. Of these at least one or two examples have survived. The famous apsidal temple at Chezarla is one of them.²⁰

Brick Temples:-

I. Keesaragutta:

An early Saivite temple of brick is situated just opposite to the western gate-way of the fort. The temple is square in plan with a square brick pedestal in the middle to insert possibly a square based linga. There is a covered drain on the north-east corner for conducting out the water of ablution. The floor inside the temple is paved with bricks. The superstructure is in ruins. There are many brick temples scattered all over the area. The transition from brick to stone is clearly discernible here.

In the early phase, all the temples were constructed of brick. There is a Jaina temple with a brick square garbhagriha to which was later adjoined a Mukhamandapa. About a hundred metres away from the Jaina temple and on the bank of the tank is another small temple dedicated to a Linga constructed entirely of granite but for the brick yoni. This may belong to the last phase.

About four hundred metres away from the present excavation site towards west, one square brick structure with a hole

and a Linga was brought to light. The Linga has a square at Brahmabhaga, octagonal shaft at the Vishnubhaga and Rudrabhaga. The shrine is in east-west orientation. This structure is unique because there is no panavatta and also in view of the fact that the plan of this Saivite structure is similar to that of Saivite open shrines noticed at Yeleswaram on the banks of the river Krishna. Now let us study each shrine in greater detail.

1) Square Brick shrine:

This is a single celled square shrine constructed in West-East orientation. The main cell was constructed with brick including walls and flooring. The outer length of the cell is 7.50 mts. x 7.50 mts., the inner length of it being 6 mts. x 6 mts. The walls of the cell are of 0.75 mt. thickness.

There is a square pedestal in the centre of the shrine. The distance from the inner side of the wall to the pedestal is 2 mts. It is 40 cm. high from the floor, outer and inner lengths being 2.10 x 2.10 mts. and 52 cm x 52 cm. respectively. There is a cavity in the centre for installing the linga, which is missing. There are five courses of brick from floor level.

A covered drain of 22 cm. width was provided from inside on the north-east corner of the shrine. The total length of this drain from inside the shrine to the other end which opens on the other side of the outer wall is 4.80 mts. The water with which Linga or image is bathed in the daily rites

passes from the image to the drain which is also known as Pranala, on the floor which traverses the middle of the north wall of the Garbhagriha and leaves through a spout. The water in which the Linga or image has been bathed is sanctified and therefore is made to flow to the north.²¹

Outside the Garbhagriha there are twenty stone slabs with hollow round cuttings in the middle probably for holding the wooden pillars. These base stones are of various sizes and their shape also is irregular. ~~The distance and~~ in all there are 20 stones. This might be an open mandapa or pradakshanapatha. The floor level of the cell is 60 cm. below the pillared mandapa outside the cell. Leaving a space of 4.40 metres on all sides, a wall of 0.95 mts. was constructed around the shrine. The length of this enclosure wall from outside is 17.70 mts. and the inner length is 15.80 mts. Superstructure is completely ruined and only the ground plan of the structure is visible. The size of the brick used in the construction of the shrine is 50 cm. x 25 cm. x 8 cm.

The square plan, being associated with the divine beings in the Vedic rituals, became sacred and shrines built on this plan and on the plans derived from it began to assume a special sanctity. Hence such shrines in Buddhist context are seen to enclose Bodhi-tree²² (eg. the Bodhighara from Amaravati) and Buddha-pada²³ (eg. the punyasala from Jaggayyapeta). More important than these are the square harmikas

which surmount the stupas. Although they are fences, yet from the way they are shown on top of the stupas and from their function of enclosing sacred objects like the Chatra-danda, their distinctly sacred character is evident. An objection to the singling out a harmika from its context and attributing to it a significance that should strictly go to an independent shrine may be anticipated. The reply to this objection is that during that period, the temple complex was only in its beginnings and its various parts are therefore not met with in one and the same context but are found scattered in a variety of contexts. There is, therefore, no illogicality in recognising in the harmika, a shrine, the suffix ka being used to denote, diminutive harmya. A harmya means a structure with terraces and is used to denote shrines also. Thus a diminutive square shrine on top of a funerary monument naturally gets special significance.²⁴

ii) Shrine No.2:

This can be called a Jaina shrine, as, at present, there is a seated Jaina idol in the open Garbhagriha, which is carved of black basalt; the height of the image is 85 cm.

It is rectangular in plan facing towards east. Eleven courses of bricks are visible from the ground level to the basement, over which rectangular stone slabs were placed for giving support to the super-structure. The Jaina idol is placed in the centre of a pillared hall on a rectangular stone slab.

The central cell of the shrine is 2.50 mts in length. There are in all nine granite pillars supporting the ceiling slabs. There is another cell to the north of the present garbhagriha which must be the sanctum-sanctorum of a Saivite shrine belonging to earlier period. The length and width of this cell is 1.80 mts x 2.00 mts. Ruins of brick platform in front of the shrine to the East are traceable. The length of this platform is 6.35 mts. and its width is 2.25 mts. This platform was given offset projection to a width of 2.30 mts. and a length of 5.70 mts. The thickness of the wall is 75 cms. The total length of the shrine on the northern side including the projection on the east is 6.50 mts.

Three lion figures are carved on a granite slab measuring 78 cm. x 70 cm. x 40 cm. one lion in the centre in a sitting position looking front and the other two on proper right and left turning sideways and looking front with mouths open. At present this panel is lying in the ante-chamber i.e. proper left to Jaina idol."

Dr. C. Sivaramamurthy observes that "the basement of stupa does not show any mouldings. It, however, shows an interesting detail which has a significant bearing on the development of the mouldings of the basement in the later day temples. It is the continuous series of friezes showing a variety of animals usually the Buddhist quartet namely lion, elephant, horse and bull in different postures".²⁵ This shrine is the best example for showing the transition from brick to stone. The mandapa-shrines etc. the punyasala from Jaggayyapet, show

that in early times the shrines were unwallled and open.²⁶

iii) Structure No.3:

Remains of another brick structure was traced on the southern side of the western gate (fortification). There is a square enclosure wall constructed with stone slabs, arranged in two rows leaving hollow space in the middle for filling with rubble etc. The length of the side of the enclosure wall is 45.6 mts. There is a 1.35 mts. wide entrance to this structure on the eastern side and provided with four steps; stone slabs are used for steps. Inside the square enclosure there is a mound of 19.2 x 19.2 mts. Two trial trenches taken on the mound revealed four skeletons of infants with associated pottery in four corners of the mound. These skeletons were found in north-south orientation with head placed towards north.

A porch like brick structure facing towards the entrance of the enclosure wall is also traced. On the southern side of the mound, at a distance of 6 metres, a dolmenoid cist like structure is found. Three verticle slabs are placed over it, capstone is fallen and displaced from its original position.

While the primeval shape of the dolmen is, architecturally, the prototype of the sanctuary enshrined in the Hindu temple, other closed types of sacred buildings also have preceded the Hindu temple.²⁷ The ^{proto} type of these shrines is the dolmen with its one large flat slab of stone, supported by three upright slabs set on edge so as to form a small chamber with side open to serve as an entrance.²⁸

Dolmens have actually been used as Saivite temples²⁹ old dolmens are set up as Siva shrines for example at Kanebaduru, Kalyanadurg, Anantapur district.³⁰ The Siva temple at Kambeduru is a dolmen converted for this purpose by a careful dressing and fitting of the stone slabs. They are not planted in the ground but are raised on a moulded plinth.³¹

iv) Structure No.4

About 400 metres towards west from the site where the present excavations are carried out, one square brick structure with a Linga fixed in a hole was exposed. The Linga has a square base at Brahmahaga, octogonal shaft at the Vishnu and Rudra Bhagas. It is in east-west orientation facing East. The structure is unique because there is no panavatta here and since this Saivite structure is similar to that of Saivite open shrines found during the excavations at Yeleswaram on the banks of the river Krishna.

Plenty of such square brick pedestals with or without Lingas are found scattered on Keesaragutta.

II. Yeleswaram:

Stumps of columns of a mandapa were noticed, and an enclosure wall was also brought to light. A brick structure appeared to have been intended for some ritualistic import as sockets were made at regular intervals around a raised pedestal for the creation of wooden columns to support a canopy. A brick structure something like a chamber was discovered, which functioned probably as votive shrine for installing Bana Linga. Another brick structure of the nature of votive shrine installed with a Banalinga connected

by an abhisekha drain was found.³²

iii) Gollathagudi:

The plans of two bricks temples facing east were brought to view. The walls over the plinth were built in brick with a system of bonding to which has added another layer to give veneering effect. Temple I being constructed in brick must have given ample scope to the builders for greater constructional possibilities, which are almost lost now due to its total collapse. The floor paved with burnt bricks was found disturbed at several places.

Gollathagudi temple complex contain a Garbhagriha, accessory cellars, Mukhamandapa, Mahamandapa and porch, which are all contemporary. The earlier ones at Gollathagudi were constructed in brick. A notable feature of these temples is the treatment of brick with excellent stucco work. The remains of a Saivite shrine are noticed to the south west of Padalagadda. Large and small size boulders were raised to a height of 60 cms. at the foundation level. Each stone slab is of 20 cms. in thickness. Superstructure was constructed in brick bonded with mud and mortar. Flooring is covered with rubble and brick.

The structure under study is rectangular in plan facing east with a square garbhagriha on the west. The main entrance of the temple has three steps 1st, 2nd and 3rd steps are 0.60 mts. 0.05 mt. and 0.25 mt. in length respectively. The entrance is 1.30 mt. in length and width. The height of the steps is 20 cm. 16 cm. and 0.13 cms. respectively. There is a square cell adjoining the steps to the proper right, raised over a

rubble foundation. The length of the cell is 2.10 mts. and its width is 2.20 mts. Main temple was constructed with granite raised over rubble foundation. Its total length is 16 mts. and width is 11 mts. There is an antarala of 4.35 mts. length and 4.50 mts. width. The thickness of the wall is 0.85 mts. Mukhamandapa is 4.00 mts. in length and 6.45 mts. in width. Brick measuring 41 cm. x 21 cm. x 7 cm. is used in the construction. Parallel to Mukhamandapa on the left there is a platform constructed with five courses of bricks. The length and width of the platform is 3.75 mt. and 4.00 mt. respectively. There is another platform parallel to antarala measuring 3.60 mt. in length and 4.90 mts. in width. In between the antarala and Garbhagriha there is a cistern like structure 1.50 mts. in length and 1.55 mts. in width and 1.00 mt. deep; fourteen courses of bricks are visible.

The Garbhagriha is square in plan measuring 2.20 mts. on each side. There is a square stone pedestal measuring 0.35 cm. x 35 cm. with a hole in the centre for installing the deity. But the idol is missing. A Nandi carved in granite with mutilated head, and decorated with band of beads and hanging bell was found in Mukhamandapa.

ii) B. Structural Temples:

Lovers of temple architecture are hard put in visualising structural forms of temple in very early times prior to the first known monuments, like the cave art of the Vishnukundins in Andhra Desa. It is, however, clear by both direct evidence as well as indirect stylistic evidence that before temples of

durable materials were erected, brick, mortar, and timber were the media. One might also presume that no complicated character in layout or elevation could have been feasible then although some variety in presentation was quite likely. The most popular aspect of such a structure might be its open character, by which the major part of the layout of the interior even including the deity fixed in a central spot might be visible to the onlooker. Early northern textual evidence reveals that there were five basic shapes which were exploited for raising of structures and those were square, rectangle, ellipse and circle and octagon. Architectural evidence of the latter day fully corroborates the application of these shapes on plan and elevation, which ultimately got reduced to three, square, octagon, and circle and were at the root of the ternary division of styles in the south into respective Nagara, Dravida and Vesara orders.³³

It is generally believed that the Brahmanical temple builders borrowed this style from the chaityas of the Buddhists.³⁴ But some scholars³⁵ believe that the stupa, the most important religious foundation of the Buddhist, was itself pre-Buddhist in origin and that it was a common form of tomb, nothing more or less than a regularly built dome-shaped pile of masonry, which was undoubtedly the oldest form of funeral monuments.³⁶ The Chaitya like the stupa was also a pre-Buddhist institution adopted by the Buddhists to secure the loyalty of the masses to their own faith. The Arthasastra of Kautilya teems with allusions to the chaityas. Certain interesting details

regarding the chaitya are given in the Arthasastra. On full and new moon days, the worship of the chaityas may be performed by placing on a verandah, offerings such as an umbrella, hasta flag and a chhaga (he-goat).³⁷ The first point which deserves notice in this context is that the chaitya is a building with a verandah. It appears that in the time of the Mauryas, the chaitya was still a Hindu religious institution.³⁸ It is argued that the Buddhists borrowed good many things from the Hindus in giving a definite shape to their religion, and asserted with confidence that the chaitya type of temples such as those at Chejarla, Ter and other places were not Buddhist temples in their original condition, but Brahmanical structures built by the Hindu architects, in accordance with the architectural traditions which they inherited from their ancestors.³⁹

No specimen of the temple structure of the Vishnukundins' period is known to exist at present. The copper plate grants of ^{the} Vishnukundin rulers such as Tummalagudem inscription of Govindavarman I and the Chikkulla plates of Vikramendra Varman-II tell us that a number of temples, monasteries etc., were built and the old ones were kept in good repairs. The Velpuru stone inscription of Madhavavarman II gives us indication that the temple of Vinayaka was constructed. It is also likely that the temple of Somagireswaranatha of the Chikkulla plates owed its origin to the workmen of the Vishnukundin period.⁴⁰

Some writers assert with confidence that there is reason to believe that the temples of Ramalingesvara and Bhimalingeswara at Satyavolu in Giddalur taluk of Kurnool district go back to

the age of Vishnukundin monarchs.⁴¹ The two temples in the village dedicated respectively to Ramalingesvara and Bhimalingesvara are built of stone from basement to sikhara. The vimanas of both the shrines rise in tiers, eleven in the Bhimalingeswara and fourteen in Ramalingesvara, they are surmounted by circular sikhara capped over by fluted kalasa. The shrines consist of a square garbhagriha and a wagon roof mantapa attached to it.⁴² In front of the garbhagriha on either side of the gateway, stand two horned dvarapalas very closely resembling their counterparts in the early Pallava temples of Mahendravarman-I time.

i) Satyavolu Temples:

The horned dvarapalas guarding the entrance of the sanctum are peculiar to the Vishnukundin and the Pallava temples. The observations of one writer⁴³ who examined the dvarapalas from the Vishnukundin, Pallava, Chalukyan and Rashtrakuta temples are noted here. "While the tradition of the horned dvarapalas from the Vishnukundin caves is found transported to the Pallava area through Bhairavanikonda further south to Tiruchirapalli caves, it is absent in these Eastern Chalukya figures that follow the traditions of the home land. Even with the lapse of time and the interplay of influences we find the horned dvarapalakas as one of a pair just as in Pallava temple, fails to occur in the Chalukyan temples, and normal type continues as in the Mallesvara temple at Vijayawada or the temples at Biccavolu. The significance of the presence of the horns in these dvarapalakas appears

to have been due to the continuance of the motif of Nagarajas known from Nagarjunakonda and Goli⁴⁴. If the middle three hoods out of the five snake-hoods from these Nagarajas are removed they will look exactly like the horned dvarapalakas of later times. If the horned dvarapala is characteristic of the Vishnukundin and the Pallava temples, and not found in the Chalukyan temples either of Badami or of Vengi, as stated by the above writer, Satyavolu temples could not have been built by the Chalukyas. As all the Pallava temples were built only in the Dravidian style, and no specimen of a Pallava shrine in the Indo-Aryan style is found anywhere, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Satyavolu temples were built by the Vishnukundins.⁴⁵ The Satyavolu group of shrines contains an apsidal or gajaprishta structure; a feature datable to pre-Chalukyan period.⁴⁶

Alampur Temples:-

The Alampur temples are among the most important ancient monuments in Andhra Pradesh. They are the largest temple complex in the State distinguished by the style of their architecture. Temples built in the same style are found in several other places in the State.

There is a fine temple of this type dedicated to Siva at Kadamalakalva in the Nandyala taluk of Kurnool district. Another shrine of the same style is at Mahanandi in the same taluk.

Opinion differs regarding the origin and the age of these temples at Alampur. Some draw attention to their resemblance to the Orissan temples and assign them to the 12th century A.D.⁴⁷

whereas others assign them to the western Chalukya kings of Badami who ruled over this part of the country in the 7th-8th centuries of the Christian era. Basing on the epigraphical evidences some writers⁴⁸ have asserted that these temples are some of the earliest in existence in the Andhra Pradesh. Labels in archaic characters found on the walls of other temples in this complex show that they belong to an even earlier period.⁴⁹

These temples constitute a veritable treasure house of architecture, sculpture and iconography and throw valuable light on the evolution of art and architecture in eastern Deccan during the post-Satavahana period.

The existing Vimanas of these Alampur temples are exactly like those of the Bhimalingeswara and Ramalingeswara temples of Satyavolu and the Mahanandiswara temple of Mahanandi.⁵⁰ These temples in Andhra Desa must be studied together for a correct understanding of this style and the temples of the so called Indo-Aryan style, particularly those belonging to the Mukhalingam and Bhuvaneswara groups on the other.

Speaking of the Ramalingeswara and Bhimalingeswara temples at Satyavolu, one writer⁵¹ states that they approach very nearly what is designated as Orissan style. Another writer⁵² asserts that the spires of the temple of Alampur are so ingeniously overlaid with decorative detail that they appear to be almost replicas of the Lingaraja temple at Bhuvaneswar in Orissa. At Alampur one notices a marked change in the shape of the spire, which is more akin to the towers in the temples of Orissa than to those in south India.

Percy Brown⁵³ also noticed the resemblance. "A comparison may be instituted between this (Parasuramesvara) temple (at Bhuvanesvar) and the somewhat earlier temples of the Chalukyans at Aihole. It will be seen that of the Parasuramesvara example, although inclined to be heavy and crude, is an improvement of the Indo-Aryan type of Sikharas subsequently added to the Aihole building. Moreover the incipient form of clerestory introduced into the Orissan temple is also an advance on the double roof of the Durga and Huchchimalligudi temples of Chalukyan group from which, however it may have been derived". The resemblances between the two groups of temples noticed by the writers cited ^{above} ~~above~~, pertains only to the Sikhara or spire. In this connection the views of one of the modern writers⁵⁴ is worth considering.

"The Andhra-Karnataka group differs from the Orissan in one important respect; whereas the spire of the former is built on the roof of the square Chambered garbhagriha or sanctum, the spire of the latter starts straight away from the ground a cell inside at the ground level forming the garbhagriha. Notwithstanding this difference, the close resemblance between the two calls for explanation. The Orissan architect seems to have derived inspiration from his Andhra-Karnataka compeer. This is not unlikely, for the Orissan style had its origin in the temples of Mukhalingam in Andhra or that part of Andhra which in ancient times had gone by the name of Kalinga. Although the Kalingas, formed a distinct group by themselves from the Andhras, they were racially, linguistically, and

culturally one and the same with the Andhras. Apart from this, Kalinga which was at first conquered by the Vishnukundins in the 5th century and subsequently by the Chalukyas in the beginning of 7th century A.D. remained an integral part of the kingdom of Vengi for several centuries when the peoples of the two countries mingled freely and lived together as common citizens of a single state. The Kalingas must have imbibed during this period, the artistic traditions of their western neighbours and gave a concrete shape to them by erecting the temples at Mukhalingam. The observations of Percy Brown deserve notice in this connection. "There is reason to believe that this (Orissan) style of temple architecture approached the eastern region from its southern extremity, spreading northwards to form the development in Orissa. Although the series at Mukhalingam may not comprise of the earliest examples, that the beginning was made in this locality is not unlikely. It has already been shown that a type of temple in a primitive Indo-Aryan style had begun to appear as far south as in the territory of the Chalukyas as early as the sixth century A.D. implying that they may have originated in that quarter. That the style of the Mukhalingam temples and of those of Orissa of a later date originated in the south (south-west) may be readily admitted. Whether it had come from the Chalukyas is more than doubtful. It is true that Pulakesin II had conquered Kalinga and together with it Vengi in 616-17 A.D. but he conferred the sovereignty of the countries on his younger brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana and

recognised his right to bequeath them as a hereditary dominion to his descendants with the appointment of Kubja Vishnuvardhana as the ruler of Vengi, Pulakesin II's connection with the east coast came to an end; and his successors at Badami had nothing to do with it. The style of Mukhalingam temples were popular. The Eastern Chalukyas, as the descendants of Kubja Vishnuvardha or the E.Chalukyas as they are called, ruled over their Kalinga subjects. They did not however favour the Indo-Aryan style., they built all their temples in the pyramidal or the Dravidian style. The builders of the Mukhalingam temples could not have adopted the style of their architecture from the Eastern Chalukyas. The recent discoveries of inscriptions in the 6th-7th century Telugu characters and the existence of horned dvarapalas in the Mukhalingam temple show that this temple goes back to the Vishnukundin period. It may be remembered that the Vishnukundins, who ruled over Kalinga before the Chalukyas made their appearance on the east coast, favoured the Indo-Aryan type. If the Kalinga architects of Mukhalingam and their predecessors acquired their fondness for the Indo-Aryan style from the south, as it is obvious, it must have been from their Vishnukundin masters of Vengi. The eastern Gangas who were the feudatories at first of the Vishnukundins and subsequently of their Eastern Chalukya successors carried it later into Orissa in the east when they conquered that country in the 12th century A.D.

The resemblance between the Andhra-Karnataka and the Orissan temples noticed above seems to be due to the inheritance of the same type from a common source rather than to conscious adoption. The Chalukyas in the West and the Kalinga Gangas in the east adopted the practice of building temples in the Indo-Aryan style from their Vishnukundin overlords who appear to have been the first among the South Indian dynasties to introduce it in the South".

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III. ARCHITECTURE -B- SECULAR

FORTIFICATION

Keesaragutta has an extensive fortification wall around the hills encompassing an approximate area of 3 to 4 square kilometres. Presently there are traces of three metres broad, dressed rubble stone foundation of a very extensive fortification wall. The bricks measuring 50 x 25 x 8 cm., used for raising the superstructure, ^{are} ~~is~~ still visible all along the fortification wall in fragments and at some places in tact. In most of the places the rubble wall was divested of the brick superstructure but the fallen brick is visible along the entire length of the wall. The fort was provided with four main gates on the east, west, north and south. Prefaced by strategic secondary walls in the shape of crescentic bulge possibly to stop direct onslaught of the enemy forces. The natural precipices of the hill were utilised as natural barriers and vulnerable points were plugged by constructing the ramparts.

Besides these main gates some water gates were also provided near the water ponds for fetching water into the fort. As there were no perennial sources of water such as rivers or streams in the vicinity, the natural depressions at the gradients were cross-bunded. Such numerous ponds are visible even today.

There is a huge tank at the foot of the fort on the west which must have served as a source of drinking water as well

as a deep water hurdle for the protection of the fort.

Similarly there is a big tank on the eastern side below the fortification.

Traces of guard rooms were found near the main gates and the entire fort is studded with brick structures.

i) Antiquity of the fort:-

Before taking up a detailed study of the fortification at Keesaragutta it is necessary to examine the antiquity of the world Fort and its importance.

The term fort denotes defence, defence from the hazards of nature like rain and sun and attacks from outside.

"Forts are built in times of peace, designed to protect political, industrial, transportation and communication centres".¹

Their importance is chiefly strategic, erected for the purpose of strengthening a place or position. According to G.T. Date "in times of yore, the fortress, was a capital means of defence".²

Defence is the predominant characteristic feature of the fort.

The growth of the fort as a defensive structure depended to a large extent upon the contemporary trends of warfare i.e. the methods of attack and defence, the weapons used and the military organisation of the various kingdoms in different periods.

According to B.P.Sinha³ fort grew as a corollary to the existing trends of warfare which is one of the oldest aspects of human existence. He remarks that the art of warfare evolved from the earliest times with attention paid to both offensive

and defensive weapons and it continued to be the most dominant and persistent features of Indian History.

According to S.D. Singh⁴ kingship grew out of warfare which it may be said in turn, gave birth to the system of defences in the form of forts and fortifications. Hence the nature and character of a fort depend to a large extent upon the contemporary trends of warfare. Kautilya⁵ assigned a place of importance and honour to forts in the body politic as a politico-military institution, and included it among the seven constituent elements of sovereignty of the State or the sapthanga viz. 1 King (Rajan); 2. Minister (Mantri); 3. Country (Desa); 4. Fort (Durga), 5. Treasury (Kosa); 6. Army (Bala) and 7. Friend (Mitra) and it became the guiding principle in later times for almost all the kings to follow:

According to Kautilya it is only in a fort, that the army and treasury are secure and it is a powerful defensive instrument to the king in times of danger.⁶ He therefore enjoins upon a king to erect forts not only around his capital but also on all the frontiers of the kingdom, in the four quarters.

The Arthasastra of Kautilya was followed by a number of other works of polity, as Dharma Sastras, puranas, and Nitisara of Kamandaka, Sukranitisara, and the Nitivakyamrita of Somadeva Suri. The Manusmrithi and the puranas like Matsya, Vayu, Brahmanda, Agni, and Vishnudharmottara, all of which ascribe a place of importance to the institution of fort, and insist upon its possession by a king. For instance,

Manu Smriti,⁷ says that a king should have a fort, equipped with a spacious palace, habitable in every season and well supplied with water, weapons, money, grains and Brahmanas, artisans, and engines, fodder etc. It considers that a bow man placed on a rampart is a match for 100 foes and 100 bowmen for 10,000 foes.

The idea or concept of a fort as a military structure appears to have undergone several changes from time to time in its size, methods of construction, disposition of various structures, additional defensive equipment, etc., depending on the contemporary trends of warfare, methods of attack and defence, and weapons and implements of warfare.

The first criterion that governs the construction of a fort is the selection of the site. The suitability or strength of a site is often determined by its strategical importance and the availability of building materials in close proximity and the availability of water resources in plenty.

The second criterion is the availability of strong building material locally or in close proximity.

The third and the most important criterion is the strategical importance of a site, both from political and military aspects.

The last criterion is the availability of natural potentialities offered by the hills, like water resources in plenty, insurmountable cliffs, and difficult pathways etc.,

The principles of fortification enunciated by Kautilya guided the builders and architects of the following ages.

Kautilya's Arthashastra, the style and contents of which presuppose its antiquity and which cannot be later than 1st century B.C.⁸ says that defensive fortifications against an enemy in war shall be constructed on grounds best fitted for the purpose; a water fortification, a mountainous fortification such as a rocky tract or a cave; a desert or a forest fortifications.⁹ He further stresses that water and mountain fortifications are best suited to defend populous centres. The king may have a fortified capital as the seat of his sovereignty in the centre of his kingdom in a locality naturally best fitted for the purpose.

Fort planning in India dates back to the Vedic period. Vedic literature mentions forts made of stone and iron.¹⁰

The importance of the forts is stated in the Mahabharata also.¹¹

The importance of the forts and ramparts increased enormously long before the Christian era as the Indian civilization progressed and prospered considerably. The importance of forts was appreciated by Manu. Fort planning formed an essential part of military engineering of the Indo-Aryans from ancient times. All exponents of the Silpasastras have stressed the importance of the forts. It was necessary to have the fortress amidst villages and towns for the efficiency of administration and Government,. Kautilya in his Arthashastra¹² emphasises the distribution of forts throughout the kingdom for the purpose of administration, jurisdiction and supervision.

ii) Classification of forts:-

There are two broad classifications of forts - the natural and artificial. The natural forts are divided into six categories i.e. water fort, mudfort, forest fort, desert fort, mountain fort and cave fort. That is, a natural fort is one which is rendered inaccessible to hostile encroachments by its advantageous situation secured by natural defences, like mountains, rivers, marshy lands, deserts, and forests. The use of the natural forts is evidence of the skill of the ancient town planners in utilising local natural barriers and in turning them into best fortification by slight manipulations and modifications.

When a town is planned, with all its accompaniments such as health residences, devotional places, public halls, common pools and wells as reservoirs of water, public parks, garden belts etc., it becomes the supreme consideration of the master town planner to have security considerations. Kautilya gives his preference to hill forts and considers them as the most unassailable. A fort on a mountain is of a self-defensive nature, and not easy to besiege or to ascend.¹³ A fortified capital might be of any shape, circular, rectangular or square, in consonance with the requirement of the ground.¹⁴

The ruins of fortification wall on the top of Keesaragutta encompassing the huge brick structures of religious as well secular buildings clearly show that it was a hill fort constructed in the post-Satavahana period by the Vishnukundin kings following the cannons of Hindu Hindu.

Science of architecture as enunciated by the ancient writers.

Detailed study of the Fort:-

A. Moat:

The first place in the technique of construction of fortification goes to the formation of the mound or the rampart i.e. the vapra. The process of the formation of the rampart is a joint operation with that of the moats the parikhas, as termed in sanskrit literature.

According to Kautilya¹⁵ a fort should have 3 ditches with an intermediary distance of 1 danda or 6 feet from each other and 14, 12, and 10 dandas i.e. 84, 72 and 60 feet in width, with a depth not less than by one quarter i.e. 21 ft. 18 ft. and 15 ft. or by one half of their width and square at bottom, and $1/3$ wide as at their top, with sides built of stones or bricks filled with water from perennial sources and contain crocodiles and lotus plants.

The main idea behind moat is to make the approach of the enemy difficult. Kautilya therefore prescribes not less than 3 moats one behind the other. The moats are of two kinds viz., a dry moat and wet moat. The dry moat is also known as ditch, which is filled up with stocks of hay, wild thorns, and creepers, concealing underneath, poisonous weapons. The wet moat is filled up with deep pools of water upto the mouth and contain crocodiles and other poisonous creatures.

So far as Keesaragutta is concerned, the huge tanks at the foot of the hill on the west and east must have served as a moat for the protection of the fort.

Traces of moat on the other side of the fort are not clearly visible now. Nevertheless it is quite probable that the natural formation of steep and slopy rock on all the other sides might have served as natural barriers for protection of the fortification wall.

B. Prakara:

Prakara forms the most important part without which a fort cannot be truly called a fort. Kautilya¹⁶ prescribes it to be created at a distance of 4 dandas i.e. 24 feet from the inner most ditch, about 6 dandas height, 36 feet, and twice as much broad i.e. 72 feet by heaping up mud upwards and by making it square at the bottom and oval at the centre pressed by trampling of elephants and bulls. It should be of sufficient thickness and height, which vary according to the contours of the ground.

The prakara wall is to be made strong by filling it up with the massive stones to make it look a grand gigantic structure.

The main material for building ramparts are mud, brick and stone. In ancient period we find largely the mud and brick fortification. The strength of a fort is determined by the number of ramparts it possesses and their height and width.

Forts in ancient Andhra are mainly built of perishable materials like mud and brick as against stone which became the chief material in later times.

As has been stated earlier, the fortification wall at Keesaragutta had a base of stone work supporting a superstructure of burnt bricks, ~~as~~^{as} evidenced from the ruins of the fortification. On the base rock surface, a masonry wall was built with brick and mud to a height of about one metre with a width of three and half metres and the brick work was bound into a solid fabric by means of stones so interspersed that the more brittle material nested upon the harder, while moist clay had been used for mortar.

Four courses of rubble structure are still visible on the southern side of the fort. The prakara from the base must have been originally 5 to 6 metres.

From the fact that whenever the height of prakara is reached to 5 to 6 metres the walls are invariably finished off with a course of small stones. As there are no fallen blocks of stone lying near, we may assume that this was the original height of the prakara.

The perimeter of the fortification wall is about seven kilometres, which runs along the steep and slopy rocks at some places and on plain natural soil at some places over the hill.

C. Towers or Turrets:

Another important element in the fortification is the raising of the towers on the parapets in all the four directions. These parapets were interspersed at regular intervals (100 hastas i.e. 150 feet or 45 metres) with towers and they were provided with moveable stair-cases, and doors so

constructed as to provide the comfortable ascent and descent. Panini and Kautilya call this carika-devapatha. Bastions or towers are mainly meant to reinforce the strength of the fort wall which run for long distances continuously, spaced at regular intervals of distance and at corners.

According to Kautilya, the wide road on the top of the parapet built along with the line of battlements (Indrakosas) was called Devapatha¹⁷. The height of the brick fort wall (prakara) above the mud-rampart (vapra) there is stated to be thirty six feet rising from the ground level and the battlements were built above it. The Devapatha extending along the city wall should be understood with reference to its great height resembling the celestial passage (Devapatha) in the heavens, justifying the comparison with the later.¹⁸

One conspicuous point that attracts ones attention is that there are no evidences of the existence of bastions for this historical hill-fort at Keesaragutta. In the absence of any such material evidence it may be safely concluded that there was no need for the construction of bastions in those days. The importance of bastions was much less in early years of the Christian era, as the wars were generally fought on the plains in those days rather than attacking the fortified cities or towns as can be seen from the contemporary history of Andhra Desa in the post-Satavahana period.

The utility as well as the purpose of the bastions of a fortress increased in the later period, that is, just before

and after the early Chalukyans rose to power in the beginning of the 7th century A.D.

Thus it may be inferred that the Vishnukundins dispensed with the bastions probably keeping in view of the military needs of their times.

There is a semi-circular projection at a distance of about 160 metres east of northern gate. At this point the fortification wall takes a curve towards East. Thick layer of mortar and brick is noticed over the natural rock. The width of the fortification wall here is 4.60 metres. Traces of superstructure are missing. On the south-east corner of the fortification, displaced stone boulders numbering about five are lying scattered near the basement formed by natural rock. The rectangular stone slabs might have been used as superstructure.

From this place four to five kms. distance is clearly visible in day light on account of its high altitude. The distance between the two boulders is nearly ten metres and width is about five metres. This is about 150 metres from the southern gate. There is every possibility to believe that the above two structures might have been used as watch towers.

D. Gateways:-

Gate-ways (Dvarah) form an important obstacle in the structure of the fort, next to the rampart. According to Kautilya an entrance gate to the fort should be 1/6th as broad as the width of the street (Kavata).

Gateways were in the form of Pyramidal towers of imposing aspect. They were called Gopurams literally the defensive structure of the town and thus fittingly adding to the fortification of the town. They formed a characteristic feature of the Indo-Aryan architecture. The Arthasastra of Kautilya mentions four principal gates on the four principal quarters and designates them as Brahma, Aindra, Yama, and Sainapatya according as they are laid on the North, East, South and West respectively.¹⁹

The gateways are to be provided with pratoli²⁰ a gateway sometimes provided with flight of steps, a small turret, the main road of town.

As stated earlier, the Keesaragutta fort was provided with four main gates on the east, west South and north.

Huge dressed rectangular stone slabs were used in the construction of the gateways. Such boulders are found even today as a representatives of the glorious past.

i) Northern gate:

Topographically, Northern side of the fortification wall appears to have been given importance and the main gate is located here. Nearly 15 to 20 stone slabs, of different sizes are lying scattered near this gateway. One of the biggest slabs measure 4.35 mts. in length 0.80 mts. in width and 0.30 mts. thickness. Another slab is the size of 3.30 mts. x 0.60 mts. x 0.25 mts.

The width of the gateway is about four metres. Topography of the hillock- indicates that this gateway is the lowest point from the (ground) sea-level.

There are traces of curtain walls in semi-circular shape as a protection to the gate from the direct onslaught of the enemy. In all probability this must be the main gate of this fortification.

ii) Eastern Gate:

The eastern gate way is slopy. Stone pavement is visible but no stone slabs are traceable. The width of the gate is about six metres.

There is a big tank just by the side of this gate down below the fortification wall which might have served as a moat. The natural rock boulders and slopy sheets of rock served as side walls for the gateway.

The gateway leads to the villages Parvathapuram, Rangapuram etc.,

iii) Southern Gate:

The width of the gate is nearly six metres. No stone boulders are visible. Probably natural rock boulders must have served as a gateway. The gate faces towards Bhogaram, Madhavaram, Kondapur, Ghatakeswaram etc.,

Innumerable natural rock boulders protect this gate way.

A platform like brick structure is seen at the entrance of the gateway but no superstructure is existing.

iv) Western Gate:

The Western gate faces towards the village Keesara. This gate is about seven metres in width. Stone slabs of the size

of 2.70 mts. x 0.70 mts. x 0.35 mts. are lying near the gate. Two big slabs probably used as door jambs are also found at this place. About 150 metres from this gate inside the fort there is a square brick shrine probably of Saivite shrine.

The northern gate is exactly at a distance of 1265 metres from the western gate. The distance between northern and eastern gates is about 1750 metres. Eastern and southern gates are at a distance of 2,360 metres. Western gate is situated at a distance of 1250 metres from southern gate.

The Kautilya Arthashastra, one of the oldest treatises on politics and sociology, gives the names of the four principal gates of the Aryans town or village.

The eastern gate, the starting point of the circumambulatory rite, was dedicated to Brahma, the creator represented by the rising Sun. The southern gate, which symbolises the Sun at noon was dedicated to Indra the vedic god who ruled the firmament during the day. The western gate was dedicated to the setting Sun, or to Yama, the Lord of Death, and the northern gate to Senapati or Kartikeya the war-God. The nature symbolism of the Vedas was changed into philosophic concept of the upanishads, Vishnu-Surya took the place of Indra at the zenith, Lord Siva was substituted for Yama and Vishnu Narayana replaced Kartikeya.²¹

E. Inner fortification:

Inner fortification wall is provided surrounding the entire palace complex, the traces of which are very much distributed.

The starting point is taken from the water tank which is about 200 metres from the western gate of the main fortification wall. The secondary wall starting from the above point runs towards north and then towards east. The wall then runs towards south and finally joins the western side of the water tank. The tank remains outside this secondary wall, and it virtually separates the palace complex and the tank.

The circumference of the wall is about 920 metres.

Brick, and stones are used for construction of this wall. The method of construction also appears to be similar to that of main fortification.

Traces of only one gate on the western side near the tank are visible. One more gate might have existed on the eastern side and another gate connecting the palace complex to the tank.

Early years of the Christian era witnessed an increased tendency to construct hill forts. This was in consonance with the teachings of Kautilya and other writers on military affairs. The typical site preferred for a hill fortress was a precipitous cliff sloping to a river on one, two or even three sides and with steep slopes falling away on the other side. At the highest point was built a fort serving as a citidel.²²

The account of Hluen Tsang goes to show that towns, even of a small size, were enclosed by walls. The Chinese pilgrim says "The towns and villages have inner gates the

walls are wide and high. The earth being soft and muddy the walls of the town are mostly built of brick or tiles.²³

IMPACT OF WARFARE ON CONSTRUCTION OF FORTS:

A study of the military organisation of various kingdoms and the representation of arms and weapons in the sculptural carvings of various periods help us to understand the system of warfare.

An Amaravati rail pillar²⁴ shows vividly the art of warfare and military organisation of these times. Cities were well defended with high walls, ramparts and gates, walls and gateways were surmounted by toranas as at Sanchi.²⁵

Warfare in ancient Andhra appears to have been based on the conventional form of "Chaduranga bala" i.e. four fold division of army into infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. During this period, infantry played a major role forming the front line of attack. Hence the wide prevalence of field warfare, or land battles, fought at a chosen site or terrain, between the two warring factions, far away from their capital cities, the idea behind which was not to disturb or cause hindrance to the civilian population. The main weapons of warfare, as seen from the sculptural carvings at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, are stones, sticks, clubs, mace which are called as "Crushing or stunning weapons",²⁶

Archaeological evidences of fortifications in early Andhra Desa:

The excavations carried out at Nagarjunakonda, revealed a citadel, with its grand fortification wall, ditches, gates and barracks, which throw light on the town planning and flourishing condition of the capital of Ikshvaku kings during

the 3rd century A.D.²⁷ Enclosing a trapezoidal area about 900 mts. x 600 mts. the citidal wall ran along the right bank of the Krishna on the west at an average distance of 105 mts. from it, while on the south it overlay the summit of the 51 mts. high Peddakundellagutta hill, it's maximum extant height on the plains being about 4.80 mts. above the outside ground level. Trenches laid across the wall, both on the east and west, showed that it had been built in two phases the first or lower phase was represented by a rampart of morrum or mud above 24 mts. wide at the base, resting on the natural soil, except on the western (river) side, where it overlay an earlier occupational deposit represented by a floor and a few hearths; the second phase was represented by a burnt brick wall 2.75 to 4.27 mts. thick, generally built either directly on the existing rampart or on a secondary filling over it, but on naturally high grounds directly on the bare rock surface. The fortification wall was surrounded by a ditch on all the three sides, 3.65 mts. in depth and varying 22.20 to 39.60 mts. in width. Two main gate-ways, one each on the eastern and western sides, and a narrow postern gate, on the northern side, possibly serving as an emergency exit were exposed; close to the eastern gateway were barracks including stables and a nicely plastered masonry cistern. The western gateway, with a minimum width of 5.10 mts. lay near the 'asvamedha' site excavated.²⁸

It is noteworthy that the shape of the fortification at Keesaragutta is almost similar to that of the brick fortification wall unearthed in Nagarjunakonda.

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B. ARCHITECTURE (SECULAR)

Palace complex:

The excavations at Keesaragutta have brought to light several brick structures which may be broadly classified as secular and religious. The religious structures have been dealt with in detail under "Brick temples". The remaining structures that have been exposed during the three field seasons of excavations may be grouped under secular.

There are six structures within a square enclosure wall measuring 54.30 metres each side. The total area inside the main enclosure wall is about 2948-50 square metres. The enclosure wall has one main entrance on the northern side and one on the eastern side.

Another structure is just outside the above enclosure wall at a distance of 3 1/2 metres from the northern main entrance; one more structure has been noticed in juxta-position and contiguous to the above structure outside the enclosure wall, which has not ^{been} exposed completely during the current field season.

For the purpose of detailed study the structures inside the enclosure wall are numbered as structures I to VI and the other which is outside the enclosure wall as structure VII.

ENCLOSURE WALL:

The wall around the square constructed with brick, mud and mortar has been exposed. The wall is 1.05 metres wide and runs 54.30 metres each side. Only to a height of about one metre has been exposed completely on the northern and

eastern sides,. The other two sides could be exposed partly only as the permanent structure like Guest House have come up preventing further excavations in that direction\ However the alignment of the wall has been traced completely.

i) Northern main entrance:-

The total length of this entrance from the first step inside the enclosure wall to the first step outside the entrance is 8.75 metres and 5 metres from inside upto the wall and 3.75 metres outside the entrance. There is a raised platform of 2.90 mts. in breadth connected with a flight of steps from inside and outside. Two steps are there at present from outside and two steps are missing. Stone slabs used for steps measure 2.20 mt. x 0.55 mt. in length, and width respectively. A railing was constructed with brick, mud and mortar on both the sides of the steps and stone slabs of the size 1.60 mt. x 0.42 mt. x 0.09 mts. were placed over it on either side. The width of the entrance is 2.20 metres.

A stone slab of 2.40 metres long and 0.50 mts. wide placed horizontally in the centre of the raised platform contains two holes on either side probably for fixing pillars of the superstructure. Each hole is of the size of 8 cm. x 6 cm. which was drilled in the middle of the rectangular base cut to a depth of about two centimetres, extending 35 cm x 25 cm. in length and breadth, probably for raising the door jambs on both the sides.

There are eight steps leading to the court yard from the main entrance. The flight of steps is provided with side

railing 1.20 metres high from the ground level. After eight steps, one half chandrasila is placed as the first step the diameter of which is 95 centimetres. The stone slabs used as steps are almost of the same size as those used for the steps outside the entrance.

ii) Eastern entrance:

The entrance has been brought to light during the present excavations. The width of the entrance is 1.14 metres and its breadth is 0.58 centimetres. Flight of steps could not be exposed during the current field season.

It is quite likely that one more entrance existed on the western side also leading to the water gate of the secondary fortification wall contiguous to the watertank.

The square plan of the enclosure wall is in accordance with the ancient Indian Silpa Sastras. According to 'Manasara' when a site is selected for constructing a building the ground is divided into different number of square.¹ The square Vastu-Purushamandala symbolises the celestial world. It is rigid and cannot be moved, thus representing a perfect and absolute form.²

Structure I:

This structure mainly consists of five cells and a rectangular hall with a porch of 4.10 metres long and 3.00 mts. wide from outside followed by flight of steps. The first step from below is a stone slab 1.70 metres in length and 0.56 metres in breadth with a thickness of 10 centimetres. The second step is Chandrasila with a diameter of 1.15 metres. There are five more steps raised on the basement constructed

with brick mud and mortar. The steps are provided with railing on the sides but the stone slabs over the railing are missing.

The flooring of the porch is 0.75 metre high from the ground level. Nine courses of bricks are traceable. From inside the porch to the first step below the length is 4 metres. Further steps leading into the porch are missing.

The porch is rectangular with a length of 1.90 mts. and width of 2.10 metres. The thickness of the wall is 1.10 mts. Immediately after passing through the porch, we enter the big rectangular hall with 19.35 metres x 4 mts. length and breadth respectively including outer walls. The inner measurements of the hall are 15.85 mts. x 2.65 mts. The height from the ground level to floor level of the hall is 2 metres.

Contiguous^{to} the hall there are five cells separated by a brick wall having a thickness of 1.20 mts. The individual measurements showing the length and breadth of the five cells from west to east are as follows:

Ist cell	=	2.65 x 2.40 mts.
IIInd cell	=	2.53 x 2.30 mts.
IIIrd cell	=	2.60 x 2.25 mts.
IVth cell	=	2.60 x 2.30 mts.
Vth Cell	=	2.60 x 2.40 mts.

The cells are separated by the walls with a thickness of 0.85 mts. The first and third cells are filled with sand while the other cells are filled with rubble and morrum.

The back wall with a thickness of 1.80 mts. on the south runs from west to east.

Lime plastering of nearly 5 centimetres thickness is visible on the outer wall of the Hall just below the porch. Projections in the corners outside the hall are noticed. Outer and inner basements are provided with a projection of about 20 centimetres.

The structure No.I is quite opposite to the main northern entrance at a distance of 20.60 metres facing north.

Structure No.II:

Structure No.II is similar to that of structure No.I in plan but there are only three cells here followed by a rectangular hall and a porch with a flight of steps. This structure is 5 1/2 metres away from the north east corner of the structure I and faces east.

The first step is a rectangular stone slab and the second one is a semi-circular stone. Above this there are two more steps leading to the porch. The first step is 1.70 metres in length and 0.50 metres in width and the second one is a chandrasila measuring 1.00 metre x 0.50 mts. Traces of railing are noticed on both sides but the stone slabs over the railing are missing. The distance from the first step to the last step including the missing steps is 2 metres.

The porch is 5 metres in length and 3 metres in breadth from outside, and 2.5 mts. x 2.00 mts. inside. The hall is 9.50 metres in length and 2.20 metres in breadth excluding the outerwalls. From outside, its length and breadth are 12.60 metres and 6.10 metres.

The size of the three cells from north to south are given below.

	<u>Length</u>	<u>Breadth</u>
1st cell -	2.70 mts.	2.10 mts.
2nd cell -	2.70 mts.	1.10 mts.
3rd cell -	2.70 mts.	2.10 mts.

The three cells are backed by thick brick wall. The outer walls are of a thickness of 1.60 mts. and the walls between the cells are 0.80 mts. in thickness.

Fine lime plastering is noticed on the front side of the walls near the porch.

Structure No.III:

Structure III is about 2.20 metres on the proper north to structure II, containing a single cell and a hall with an entrance provided with steps facing towards East. The first step is a rectangular stone slab of the size of 1.60 x 0.50 x 0.10 mts. in length, breadth and thickness respectively.

Second one is a semi-circular stone with a diameter of 1.10 metres. The breadth of the entrance is 1.50 mts.

The hall is 3.50 mts. in length and 2.50 metres in breadth inside and 4.50 mts. x 3.50 mts. from out side i.e. including walls.

The inner length and breadth of the cell is 2.80 mts. and 2.00 metres respectively, while the outer measurements of it being 5.50 metres x 5.50 mts. Inside the cell lime plastering is noticed on the flooring and also on the walls,. The lime plastering is intact. There are three niches in the middle of the back wall of the cell. The measurements of the three niches are as follows:-

	<u>Length</u>	<u>Width</u>
1.	30 cms.	20 cms.
2.	25 cms.	20 cms.
3.	28 cms.	20 cms.

A globular earthen pot³ with a lid decorated with serpents, and other figurines was recovered in the north-west corner of the hall. A human skeleton in an inverted position was also found under the debris of a fallen wall just outside this structure III. This structure is in east-west orientation facing east.

Structure No. IV:

Exactly opposite the structure III there is another structure nearly 23 metres away towards east. This structure IV, facing west, contains a hall and a cell. This is very much disturbed. The wall separating the hall and the cell is not traced.

The hall is 3.70 mts. in length and 3.50 mts. in breadth. The size of the cell is 3.20 metres x 2.60 mts.

The outer walls are of a thickness of 1.20 metres. Steps are missing. The whole structure is 10.50 mts. in length and 6.40 mts. in breadth.

~~structure is 16.50 mts. in length and 13.00 mts. in breadth.~~

Structure No. V:

About one metre to the proper south of structure IV there is another structure with two rectangular halls on the back and the front separated by three cells in the middle contiguous to the front hall. The structure also faces west, and is just opposite structure II. Steps are not traced. The entire structure is 16.50 mts. in length and 13 metres in breadth.

The inner length of the front hall is 13 metres and it is 2 metres in breadth .

The central hall is divided into three cells with the following measurements.

	<u>Length</u>	<u>Breadth</u>
1st cell	2.50 mts.	2.50 mts.
2nd cell	3.50 mts.	2.50 mts.
3rd cell	2.50 mts.	2.50 mts.

The length of the back hall is 10 metres and breadth is 3.20 mts.

Beautiful stuccos, pot sherds, beads, coins, etc., were found associated with the structure, V, one redware storage jar was recovered in the north west corner of the front hall.

A fragment of panel of about 28 centimetres long and 15 centimetres wide and 7 centimetres thick has been found outside this structure. The panel is plastered with lime and a green coating is applied over it with a thickness of 1 1/2 centimetres.

Structure No. VI:

To the proper south of structure V at a distance of about 12.50 mts. another structure has been exposed. A rectangular hall measuring 12 metres in length and 6.70 mts. in breadth with the walls having a thickness of 1.10 metres have been noticed. The inner length and breadth of the hall is 10 metres and 4.60 metres respectively. Two courses of bricks only are visible all along the structure.

A wall contiguous to this structure running south-wards took a semi-circular curve and turned towards west. This wall constructed with rubble projects exactly at the south-east corner of the enclosure wall and runs towards west taking a semi-circular curve. As in the case of other structures at the site, the superstructure is completely destroyed. Only rubble is visible. In continuation of this rubble wall a few slabs planted vertically have been noticed almost in the middle way. The other part of the wall could not be exposed as the entire site is under heaps of debris. It is likely that this wall continued and joined the other corner viz., south-west corner of the main enclosure wall thus forming a complete semi-circular or half-moon shape. Probably this must be a retaining wall for the main enclosure wall on the south. This reminds us of the apsidal (chapa-like) plan. If the apsidal plan is analysed it is seen to be composed of a semi-circular and an oblong parts. In other words it is a combination of elements of both circular and the square forms.

Trough:

A trough made of stone slabs measuring 2 metres in length and 0.75 mts. in width has been brought to light inside the brick enclosure wall, five metres from the main entrance on the north. Small heaps of lime mortar, lime mixed kankar are seen piled up in a row along the enclosure wall. The length of the tub on the top is 2.25 mts. and 1.78 mts. at the bottom, the width at the top and the bottom being 75 cms. and 25 cms. respectively. The depth of the tub is 43 cms. Thus it is wider at the top and narrower at the bottom; the sides are slanting. It is quite likely that this trough was used for mixing lime for plastering of the various structures in the building complex mentioned above. The Silpa Ratna⁴ describes different kinds of lime plaster; mainly powdered. Vajralepa, according to the Silpa Ratna⁵ is a high grade lime plaster with two percent resin in its composition and other binding and adhesive substances. Preparation of vajralepa is described in Brihat Samhita⁶ and Vishnu Dharmottara⁷. The term Vajralepa denotes a special kind of plaster particularly described in the Silparatna, the ^{7(a)}Manasollasa and the Isana Gurudeva Paddhati.⁸

The walls to which lime plaster (suḍḍha) has been applied should then be coated with a paste of hide-glue mixed with white earth in three layers, and above it another final coat of the same paste mixed with powdered conch etc.⁹ From the above literary evidences it appears that the tub was used for mixing the lime plaster glue, or Vajralepa for fine

plastering of the walls, panels, stuccos, pillars etc., of the building complex. Number of stuccos, terracottas, fragments of plastered bricks probably used for the pillars of the superstructure for decorative purpose recovered in the course of excavations inside the enclosure wall strengthens the above view.

Some of the stuccos are beautifully painted in red ochre yellow and green, some of the bricks are lime plastered and painted in red ochre, green and yellow. Fine lime plastering is noticed on the walls at the basement level. At some places plastering was done with mud and over this mud plastering lime plastering was applied. As has already been mentioned, a panel plastered with lime and green coating over that lime plastering is found near the structure No.V. The thickness of the plaster is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ centimetres. All the above facts go to prove that the plastering material was prepared within the building complex itself in a most scientific method with technical skill and aptitude.

Structures outside the enclosure wall

Structure No.VII:

Structure VII is outside the enclosure wall at a distance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ metres from the main northern entrance of the enclosure wall towards north-east. The structure is facing east. The total length of it is 14 metres and the breadth is 13 metres. It is also constructed with bricks upto basement. Huge stone slabs are placed over the brick wall. There are four rooms in four corners measuring 2 x 2 metres each. A flight of

of steps is provided to a length of $4\frac{1}{2}$ metres with a breadth of 2 metres, constructed in bricks on the eastern side. The main entrance to this structure appears to be on the northern side since a flight of steps and a porch are noticed here. The plan of the structure appears like a "chatuh-sala" mentioned in the ancient Indian Silpa Sastras.¹⁰

The frequent mention of chatuh-sala houses in sanskrit literature makes it quite clear that they were quite characteristic of the buildings in ancient India.¹¹

Chatuhsala occupies all four sides of the house with a central open court. This class of sala house was most common in ancient India. According to the texts, houses of the Brahmins should be square like temples. If the houses of Brahmins are not square, they should nearly resemble a square i.e. the length may exceed by $1/10$ th only.

Another brick structure has been brought to light during the current field season, in juxtaposition to the existing modern road.

About ten metres east of structure VII at a depth of 0.75 metres from the ground level, a brick wall, 19 metres long running in north-south direction connected to a square porch at the northern end has been brought to light during the course of recent excavations. The breadth of the wall is the same as that of the main enclosure wall of the palace complex, viz., 1.05 metres. After running for 19 metres towards south, the wall turned to the east at right angle,

parallel to the main enclosure wall with an intervening space of 12 metres. This wall could not be exposed completely as there is a modern road over the structure on the eastern side. Coming to the porch, it is $5\frac{1}{2}$ mts. x 2 mts. inside ~~and~~ the $7\frac{1}{2}$ mts. long outside. The total length of the porch from west to east is 8 metres. Flight of steps to the west are noticed. A brick wall is traced to the north of the porch in alignment to the nineteen metre wall on the south; here also the wall could be traced only upto about 2 metres as the wall is leading towards the modern road, which prevented further excavations.

Leaving a space of about 3 metres from the porch to the west another brick wall running towards west parallel to the structure No.VII with a square porch just facing the Northern entrance of the structure VII has been traced. This porch is similar to the northern entrance of the palace complex. Only two courses of bricks are noticed in this wall. The wall is 14 metres long from the eastern side of the porch. The complete alignment of the above two structures could not be exposed due to the construction of pucca roads on the east as well as on the north of the site where the archaeological excavations have been taken up.

It is quite likely that these two walls described above must be the enclosure walls, consisting of number of mansions inside, similar to the palace complex described in the preceding paras.

The alignment of these structures that have been brought to light during the course of the excavations are shown in the plan.

Dr. V.V. Krishna Sastry, is certain that the structure I with five rooms prefaced by a rectangular hall, a square porch and flight of steps must be a multistoried building. The flat roof made up of rectangular terracotta tiles and plastered with lime was laid over horizontal rafters supported by wooden pillars raised outside the walls. (The super-structure is completely destroyed). The massive style of architecture of the multistoried secular buildings at Keesara^{gutta} and decorative features may indicate that it may be the palace complex of Vishnukundin period, protected by a secondary fortification wall of rubble which encompasses an approximate area of one kilometre.¹²

The following literary evidences also support the above view, right ^{from} the selection of the site to the completion of the building.

Exponents of the Silpa-sastras have laid great stress on the selection of a proper site for founding a new village or town. According to Manasara¹³, the site is to be examined and its fitness determined from its smell, colour, taste, shape, direction, sound and touch. The ground should be smooth and level and inclined towards the east. It should produce a hard sound. The odour of the site should be agreeable. It should have good quality soil. The site should

produce water when dug to the depth of a man with his arms raised above his head. The temperature of the site should be moderate. The site which does not possess such qualities is not fit for habitation.

According to Mayamata¹⁴, the site should be fertile enough for all kinds of seeds. The earth of the site should either have a uniform colour or of all colours, white red, yellow and black. It should also have all the varieties of taste and should have a mixture of a small proportion of sand.

After the study of general site conditions such as geology, topography, drainage, vegetation, wild life and climate a detailed study of the ground and its soil conditions is to be carried out. Manasara¹⁵ divides the soils into four kinds and lays down the order of priority with reference to seven traits such as colour, smell, taste, form, direction, sound and touch. The best soil is classified as "Brahmin" the other types being 'Kshatriya', 'Vaisya', and 'Sudra'. It is important to note that the qualities of the ground and soil mentioned do not necessarily mean that they were inhabited exclusively by the respective varnas. In Silpa sastras the term 'Brahmin' does not denote the caste but the quality. Thus "Brahmin" means the best.¹⁶

The Matsya purana describes a mystic method of determining the best building sites for the four classes.¹⁷

After the selection of the site, the next important step was to determine the cardinal directions by means of a gnomon¹⁸ which is expounded in detail in the sixth chapter of Manasara.

The square Vastupurushamandala, as we noticed in the building complex at Keesaragutta, symbolises the celestial world. It is rigid and cannot be moved, thus representing a perfect and absolute form.

The site planning principles expounded by Kautilya and Sukracharya are not based on the principles of Vastupurushamandala but on sound common sense and logic. Kautilya¹⁹ lays down that the demarcation of the ground inside the fort shall be made by opening three royal roads from west to east and three from south to north.

Kautilya²⁰ further describes the various cardinal directions towards which the quarters of various classes were to be situated. The king's quarters were situated in the centre of the city slightly towards north and occupied one-ninth of the total site inside the fort. The palace faced east or north.

Kautilya²¹ further states that in the centre of the city and in every other quarter shrines of the guardian deities of the communities residing in them are to be built. At a distance of 100 dhanus (1 dhanu = 6 feet or 1.85 mts. approximately) from the ditch or moat outside the fort in open country places of worship and pilgrimage, groves and buildings shall be constructed. Vatsayana recommended the building of a house close to a pond with an 'udayana' garden outside.²²

Ancient Silpa sastras divided buildings into four categories namely houses for the common people, palaces and

gorgeous mansions for the princes and nobles, temples, and lastly the public buildings such as public rest houses, etc. The architectural treatment of these four classes of buildings has been distinct in nature and definite in its contribution. Ancient Indian Silpa Sastras lay comparatively less stress on the secular architecture. This does not mean that such housing is not given due importance. The older treatises like Manasara and Mayamata deal mainly with palace and temple architecture. Secular architecture acquired prominence during the early mediaeval period, but this was in confirmity with the house architecture followed during ancient times.²³

With slight variations all Silpa sastra-s agree that palaces should be located in the centre of the town. Kautilya²⁴ states that the palace should occupy one-ninth of the total area inside the fortifications of the town and shall be located slightly towards north.

Manasara²⁵ divides palaces into nine categories with regard to their size and also according to the nine classes of the kings for whom they are meant. The palace complex generally comprised of various buildings which were essential because of the manifold needs of the princely class. Manasara makes out a list of 42 palace establishments.

Manasara divides royal palaces into two main categories. The first one is known as Antah-sala (interior palace with courts) and the other Bahis-Sala (exterior palaces and courts) the interior salas with their courts are obviously meant for

the residences of the king and his family, while the outer salas are for the administrative establishments such as sabha halls and so on. Another important feature of ancient Indian palaces is the effective use of water reserviors in various salas. The use of water bodies was provided for both ritualistic purposes as well as for pleasure. The various water bodies expounded in the Silpa-sastras are Kupa (well), Vapi (stepped well), Kunda (deep pond), pushkarini (shallow pond), Tadaga (lake) and so on.²⁶

According to the building-by-laws enforced in the ancient India, from the plinth to the ground level, a flight of steps shall be provided. A 'Vedika' or a raised seat shall be provided on both the sides of the entrance door to the house. This rule is laid down by Brihat Samhita, Visvakarma Vidyaprakasa and Visvakarmaprakasa²⁷ and Mayamata²⁸, which indicate that this rule was widely observed.

Now coming to the shape of the building complex, this resembles the "Maulika" mansion described in Manasara.²⁹ The storied mansions consist of rows of buildings varying in number of storeys upto twelve are artistically joined up. They are classified under six main groups called dandakam, svastika, maulika, chatur-mukha, sarvatobhadra, and vardhamana. The 'maulika' mansion is shaped like a winnowing basket and consists of three rows of buildings.

The contents of the chapter XI in the Manasara describe in detail the measurements of length, breadth, and height

of buildings of one to twelve storeys, assigned to persons of different ranks. A palace of five to twelve storeys is stated to suit the emperor or the universal monarch, highest in rank among the nine classes of kings. Residence of one to three storeys are assigned to the heir-apparent and the chief feudatories, and so on.

In the light of the foregoing facts, it may be safely concluded that the structures 1 to iv inside the enclosure wall were the royal mansions consisting number of storeys. The open space in the centre of the buildings must be the court yard. The main entrance must have had a tower or gopura like superstructure with a square porch below it. Structure III and V appears to be single celled shrine where the guardian deities³⁰ were set up but unfortunately no such images have been brought to light in course of archaeological excavations except a decorated earthen pot,³¹ and a human skeleton near the structure III.

Structure VII which is outside the main enclosure wall, identified as Chatuhsala according to silpa sastras appear to have been occupied by the Brahmins - royal teachers or priests. Kautilya³² says that the Brahmins shall reside to the north. The structure VII is exactly on the northern side of the main palace complex.

The six brick structures inside the main enclosure wall consisting of cells, with rectangular halls in front, and a spacious open court yard within the compound may be mistaken

as monasteries of the Jainas. The Jaina temple in the vicinity may give support to the above argument. A monastery has a big open court yard in the centre with monks' cells arranged along the walls of the enclosure.³³

In architecture both Buddhist and Jain structures are more closely connected with the Hindu ones. The Jain style was 'essentially Hindu', declares Fergusson, and was doubtless largely common to all Hindu sects, but in its evolution it became modified by Jain taste and requirements.³⁴ The religion of the Buddhists and that of the Jains were so similar to one another, both in their origin and their development of doctrines that either architecture must also at first have been nearly the same. A strong presumption that the architecture of the two sects was similar arises from the fact of their principal sculptures being so nearly identical that it is not always easy for the casual observer to distinguish what belongs to the one and what to the other.³⁵ There is, however, a marked difference of the Jain architecture of the South. The first peculiarity that strikes one as is the division of the temples into two classes, Bastis (Basadi, Vasati, monastery or temple) and Bettas (Wasahika, buildings, including monastery and temple. The former are temples, in the usual acceptance of the word, and always containing an image of one of the twenty four 'Tirthankaras', which is the object there worshipped.

But the brick structures both, secular and religious brought to light during the excavations at Keesaragutta

definitely belong to Brahmanical Architecture. Further there is no need for such a huge and massive fortification, secondary walls and masonry enclosure walls just for the sake of protecting a Jaina monastery. Moreover, not even a single image of Tirthankaras has been noticed associated with the structures inside or outside the enclosure wall.

The availability of Siva Lingas in alignment, square brick shrines of Saivites with brick pedestals in the centre the massive style of architecture of the multistoried secular buildings, the decorative features, and other concomitant evidences such as Vishnukundin coins, pottery, beads, terracottas, stuccos etc., go to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the building complex under discussion was a palace complex belonging to early kings of the Vishnukundin dynasty.

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C. ART

Architecture as a fine art must possess certain aesthetic features and must also indicate creative effort in the shaping of human actions towards the attainment of intellectual progress and elevation of life in its various aspects.

The Vishnukundin period witnessed allround progress in the field of fine arts.

i) Miniature temples:-

Adjacent to Yeleswaraswamy temple at Yeleswaram, Devakulas or votive shrines were found constructed in different orientation. Inside these shrines Banalingas were installed with or without yonipithas.

They might have been a part of the custom that developed here which enjoined the devotees to take vow to instal a Siva linga and build a small shrine and leave it thereafter dedicating to the Lord.

Five miniature votive shrines about more than 0.90 mts. in height were found near the temple complex in Yeleswaram. These shrines have a low adhithana, flat kapota by a semi-circular sikhara incised with an inscription, the characters of which resemble to some of the inscriptions of the Vishnukundin period. It has a Linga on vedi inside. Such votive shrines bearing the same architectural features except some of them represented with kudu arches on the vimana are also found in Mahanandi and Kadamalakalva. The other miniature shrines found at Yeleswaram have the same architectural features as described above, but they contain sculptures of

Siva, as Ardhanariswara, Harihara, Umamaheswara and also a Linga on vedi. There is a row of six miniature stone-cut shrines to the south of the Mandapa, and two more rows of twelve shrines behind the Mahanandiswara temple, of which the following are important.

1. Shrine with low adhistana, flat kapota and Vimana of two steps with a Nagara sikhara above and a linga on vedi inside.
2. Shrine with a solid Nagara Vimana and a linga on vedi inside.
3. Shrine with flat kapota, vimana of four moulded steps, an amalaka sikhara above and a linga on vedi inside.
4. Apsidal shrine on an adhistana with plain wall, moulded kapota, griva and apsidal sikhara. The front part of the sikhara contains nasika or gable with a smaller nasika inside it with a human figure.

There are four smaller shrines behind the Mahanandiswara temple. One of these has a vimana of four steps crowned by an amalaka sikhara. Another is also of same type and of the vesara order but has a nasika on the face of each of the three steps. The third is a stepped vimana of the Nagara order. The fourth has a vimana of seven steps crowned by an amalaka sikhara.

There are sixteen miniature stone-cut shrines within the compound of the Bhimalingeswara and the Ramalingeswara temples at Satyavolu. They all have linga on vedi inside, are of varying sizes.

ii) Sculptures:-

The sculptures of Siva as Ardhanariswara, Harihara and

Umamaheswara elegantly and exquisitely carved in deep niches of the miniature shrines found at Yeleswaram are described below.

(a) Siva as Ardhanarisvara:-

Lord Siva is shown in half-male and half-female form in Tribhanga posture. In his right upper hand he is holding a Trisula and in his lower right hand which is raised carries probably a Damaruka. The Devi in her left upper hand carries some indistinct object probably Nilotphala or a mirror and her left hand is in akimbo patrakundala worn by woman is shown in the left ear of lord Siva and right ear has a Makarakundala. This sculpture is adorned with Graiveyaka, Katisutra, keyura and bracelets. The jata is beautifully bundled up to form a ushnisha over his head bedecked with flower.

(b) Harihara:

Both the figures are shown in Samabhanga posture and their stance is indeed graceful. Both of them are represented with four hands. The right upper hand of Siva carries a Trisula, the outer counter of which is almost circular. The lower right hand which is raised carries Damaruka, upper left hand is in akimbo and the lower left hand which is also raised carries an indistinct object. He is also adorned with Udarabanda round his waist, keyura and kankana on his arms. The third eye is present and his jata is arranged in the form of Makuta bedecked with flowers. Vishnu carries a Gada in his right upper hand, conch in the raised lower right hand and the

upper left hand in katyavalambita posture and the lower right carries the chakra. So far as the ornaments are concerned they are same as worn by Siva except that he is wearing a tapering kirita.

(c) Umamaheswara:-

This panel depicts Siva with Parvati, Skanda and Ganesha. Siva and Parvati are sitting on a high pedestal in lalithasana posture having Ganesha on the right of Siva and Skanda clinging to her breast. Ganesha has only single pair of arms and has no crown over his head. Siva is represented with four hands and Parvati with two. The right leg of Siva is hanging down and resting on the footrest while the left leg is bent and resting on the seat. Below in front is a couchant Nandi. His right upper hand is resting on the thigh and the lower hand which is raised carries, probably, Damaruka. The left upper hand passes round the back of Parvati and the lower left hand carries some object over his left shoulder. Here he is wearing yajnopavita probably of Mukuta, udarabanda of three bands round his attenuated waist, elaborate Kundalas beautify her ears. Particularly the pose of Parvati is very graceful, in a caressing attitude she has placed her right hand on the thigh of her Lord and holds Kartikeya in her left arm clinging to her breast like a devout mother. She is also wearing armlets and bracelets, Mekhala of two bands round her waist, a beautiful necklace and her braid is artistically adorned and decked with pearls.

(d) Early Vishnu sculpture:

A beautiful sculpture of Vishnu whose head and feet were mutilated was found at Yeleswaram. The modelling of torso and body was chaste and beautiful. This appears to be an early form of Vishnu holding a sakti or staff in his right hand and a conch in the left. On stylistic grounds this may be assigned to 4th and 5th century A.D.

(e) An early sculpture of Narasimha:-

This sculptured panel was discovered over a hillock inside a square shrine which is now in dilapidated condition, at Kondamotu, located on the outskirts of Piduguralla village nearly 65 kilometres from Guntur on the road to Macherla.

It is an oblong panel of limestone measuring 1.5 x 0.61 metres carved with six standing figures in bas-relief.

The figure on the extreme left is standing in abhanga posture, his right hand resting on the Ikshuchapa (sugar cane bow) and in his left hand he holds a makaradhvaja. The figure next to him stands in Samabhanga posture. His right hand is shown in abhaya pose. He carries a conch shell in his left hand which is in katyavalambita pose. The third is a very peculiar figure of a couchant lion with legs taut and tense and the face is devoid of teeth but in centre of the chest is prominently shown the Vaishnavite Lanchana 'Srivatsa'. To this couchant lion at the level of the neck two hands are added, shown in uplifted position holding the attributes of Vishnu, gada and chakra in his right and left hands.

Flanking the left side of this icon is a standing image shown in tribhanga holding a flute and a bow in his right and

left hands. His right hand is shown in katyavalambita pose. Next to this figure there is another shown in standing position holding a tyron or a wine goblet in his right hand and the left in akimbo. The last figure carries in his right hand a sword which resembles the incurved blade and a shield in his hand. There might be another figure by the side of the first figure mentioned above as it can be seen clearly that the demarcating plaster which is shown on the right side is conspicuous by its absence on the left side where the slab is broken. This has disturbed the symmetry of the entire composition but in its original state it appears that the sculptor had maintained perfect symmetry and balance by carving a group of three figures on either side of the central figure Narasimha.

The central figure has two arms bearing a gada and a chakra and tries to emphasize more the animal aspect i.e. the entire lion is shown in couchant form while its anthromorphic form is suggested by its two hands which are added at the neck level.

Normal representation of Narasimha shows a human body or torso with a lion's head. Literature¹ refers only to seated and standing forms of Narasimha having a human body with lion's head. Considering the strange nature of the representation of this icon, it is quite possible to assume that in the early period i.e. early 4th century A.D. the anthromorphic representation is an exception rather than a rule.

The first figure from left, which carries Ikshu-chapa (sugarcane bow) in his right hand and a Makaradhvaja in his

left, apparently, looks like Manmatha, Pradyumna the eldest son of Krishna through Rukmini.

The next figure may be indentified with two armed Vishnu, the right hand is in abhaya pose, the left one carries a conch shell.²

The third figure is of Narasimha in its kevala form.

Some difficulty arises in identifying the fourth figure. Vasudeva is not generally shown holding a bow or dhanus like Rama. The flute that he carried in his right hand helps us in identifying it as Krishna. But the image of Krishna should hold akridayasti or a flute in his right hand and the left hand has to be raised to the level of the elbow and shoulder and the remaining features should be as in case of Rama.³ Hence this is an indication that Krishna can also be represented holding a dhanus or bow.

The fifth figure standing on the left hand side of Vasudeva who carries a wine goblet in his left hand might be Sankarshana as sometimes he is shown holding a drinking vessel emphasizing his inebriety.

The last figure next to Sankarshana who carries a sword in his right hand and a shield in his left might be Aniruddha the grandson of Vasudeva who usually carries khadga in his right hand and a khataka or shield in his left.⁴

The sixth figure is completely missing now might have been Samba, another son of Krishna by Jambavati.

It is clear by the perusal of the above description that Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Anirudha were worshipped as 'Panchaviras' in such early date in Andhra Desa.

The importance of this sculptured panel has to be assessed from its provenance and the period to which it belongs. Its discovery in the coastal Andhra is significant and the coastal Andhra in the beginning was fervently devoted to the Buddhism, perhaps upto the fall of Ikshvakus. With the rise of the Pallavas Brihatphalayanans and Anandagotrin and Vishnukundins under whose aegis Buddhism received a set back and Hinduism with its sects like Saivism and Vaishnavism received encouragement, there must have been a school of reformists which aimed at the establishment of the glory of Hindu Dharma and the sculpture of early Narasimha may be manifestation of the spirit of the age when people conceived numerous forms for their pet gods and goddesses and Vishnu along with Siva was shown in all hybrid forms. We find the tendency in early sculptures to represent gods and goddesses in usual human forms.

The Vishnu of this panel who holds conch in one hand is shown in no way superior to the other members of Panchavyuha depicted in the panel. The other important thing which one can notice in this panel is that symbolism still continued and persisted as Lakshmi is not shown in human form but is suggested as in the early Buddhist sculptures by the symbol like Shrivatsa on the chest of the image of Narasimha.

The importance of this sculptured slab can be gauged from the fact that no sculpture of Vishnu ascribable to such an early date was discovered in the Andhra area. This Sculptured panel showing Vishnu in anthropomorphic form and also in animal form is perhaps the earliest extant. As such it is a rare and unique discovery.⁵

iii) Stone plaque:-

A stone plaque, which is square in shape, each side measuring 12 cm. with a thickness of 1.5 cm. has been recovered from Keesaragutta excavations.

Mother goddess in sitting posture, legs bent and wide open, both hands raised holding a Siva linga in right hand and head of a lion in the left hand is depicted on the plaque, Nandi(bull) looking upwards towards Siva linga on the right side and a human figure sitting and facing towards mother goddess are also engraved. This human like figure appears to be of a worshipper or an attendant holding a fan or Vinjamara in one hand. Just above the central figure and in between the Siva Linga and the lion's head there is a semi-circular and globular two tier structure resembling an inverted Lotus. There are criss-cross lines on this lotus. Waist and genitals of the mother goddess are covered with a ~~scarf~~^{sari} which goes around the waist and the other end hanging down.

Some believe that she is popularly known as Yellamma or Renuka, the female counter part of Jamadagni and the mother of Parasurama.

Mother goddess appears under various names and forms giving raise to diverse myths. Indian traditions represent the great Mother-Goddess (Adi Sakti) with a large number of names; but it has been suggested that they are not merely names of same goddess; but that they originally indicated

different goddesses worshipped by different tribes in different parts of the country and that they were afterwards identified with the Mother Goddess. It is also believed that the aboriginal elements have largely contributed not only to the conception of Siva, but also to that of his wife. Siva's relation with hill tribes is indicated by his name Girisa, 'one who is Lord of the mountain'.⁶ As regards the significance of the lion, it is almost constantly associated with the Goddess.⁷ ~~The~~ The Indian earth goddess is also called a lioness in a passage in the yajurveda⁸ and Satapatha Brahmana,⁹ and later on the lion is a favourite animal of Parvathi just as the bull is of Siva.

The symbolism of the lotus flower is especially applied to the rising or setting Sun, which is likened to a lotus flower floating on the cosmic waters - hence the poetic expression of the Vishnu's or Siva's lotus feet.

The name of lotus dome was given to it by Indian crafts men who worshiped the rising Sun as the mystic world-lotus.¹⁰

The cult of the Mother Goddess besides the Linga worship has been depicted in this small plaque datable to circa 4th century A.D.

iv) Decorated Globular pot:

The potters' craft was also fairly well developed in the Vishnukundin period and the globular pot with a lid richly decorated with serpents and terracotta figurines recovered from Keesaragutta is the best example for such craftsman-ship. The importance of the pot has been described in greater detail separately in the chapter on pottery.¹¹

v) Terracottas and stuccos:-

Keesaragutta:-

In the course of the excavations, beautifully modelled human and animal stucco figurines used for decorating the walls of the building were exhumed. Terracotta spools about 5 cms. in diametre have been recovered.

A spool is beautifully designed with incised rays emanating from a common centre. The other spool of black grey ware is incised with a lotus design inside a circle. The third one has punched star pattern around the periphery and in the middle are seven stars encircling a single star.

Beads made of terracotta are also met with. The shapes among terracotta beads are pear spherical, amalaka, and tabloid. Terracotta plaques immensely decorated semi-circular in shape have been recovered.

A terracotta figure depicting a mother holding a child in her left hand has been found, the head of the figure is broken. The tradition of figuring Mother Goddess was a prominent feature in Indian art in historical times.¹² Most conspicuous iconographic features of these terracottas are the nudity, enormous breasts and hips, position of arms to hold a child and the figures showing child suckling the breast of the Goddess. All these suggest that iconographically they are the representation of the fertility goddess.¹³

vi) Stuccos:-

The collection of stuccos include a) a stucco with a diametre of 12 cm. containing floral designs, b) a stucco

head of a lion - mouth and nose distinctly visible eyes and ears broken; c) stucco of a bird probably a swan; head and beak only visible; d) stucco of animal face with wide circular eyes probably a yala figure 3) a beautifully moulded stucco of a tiger head with nose, mouth and two incisor teeth prominent.

Some of the stuccos are painted in red ochre, yellow and green.

vii) Bricks:-

Chistled or carved bricks - semi-circular rectangular in shape, have also been found. Some bricks are plastered with lime and painted in red ochre, yellow and green.

Another type is a round and perforated brick with a hole in the centre.

Viii) Another interesting specimen is a rubber like square clay object probably (for rubbing the skin during bath) used as flesh rubbers during bath.

Yelagwaram:

The excavations yielded a large number of terracottas comprising of male and female figurines, animals, birds, toy-carts, etc., which revealed the folk art of the remote past. Majority of the female terracotta figurines, represent female devinities with very elaborate coiffure, dressed in a tunic or nude to the waist and with a dhoti or skirt. Despite the garment, special care is taken to reveal the ~~amount~~ of venus in apparent nudity. They may be auspicious representation of the Mother Goddess Aditi.

bestowers of fertility and proto types of Mayadevi and
Lakshmi.

Gollathagudi:-

The excavations at Gollathagudi temple complex also
yielded a large number of terracotta figurines made in
stucco which included human and mythical animals. Some types
contain floral designs.

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5. RELIGION

(a) It is rightly said that the age of the Vishnukundins is a transitional period in the religious history of the country.¹ Buddhism which was dominant during the time of the Satavahanas began to show signs of decay under the Ikshvakus, and it continued to loose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishnukundin period.

Several Ikshvaku kings were staunch Saivas, and they erected several temples in their capital Vijayapuri dedicated to the God Siva and his attendant deities. The existence of several temples dedicated to Kartikeya, brought to light by the spade of the archaeologist at Nagarjunakonda shows that the worship of War God Kumaraswamy was also popular under the Ikshvakus.

Though the early kings of the Vishnukundin ^{dynasty} ~~monarchy~~, like Govindavarman I and Vikramendrabhattaraka I, adored the Buddha, built stupas and the Viharas, the subsequent rulers of the family were all staunch followers of Brahmanic Hindu dharma.

Govindavarman I, the founder of the Vishnukundin ^{dynasty} ~~monarchy~~, and his queen paramabhattarika Mahadevi, were Buddhists in faith. He is said to have built in all provinces of Dakshinapatha, viharas adorned with sculptures of various kinds by which he acquired brahma-punya. He accepted Buddhism after a study of shad-abhijna pratiharya darsana. Though he embraced Buddhism, he was tolerant: He built temples for the Hindu Gods. He believed that his wealth was for the

enjoyment of the bhikshus etc., and gave away all his possessions in charity. Paramabhattarika Mahadevi his queen was also a devout follower of the Buddha and she built a spacious vihara at Sakrapura for the use of the bhikshus.

Madhavavarman II was a devoted follower of vedic Brahmanism. Madhavavarman II and IV are credited with the performance of several vedic sacrifices. The performance of vedic sacrifices appears to have become popular, for most of the ruling kings of this age claim to have performed 'asvamedha' and a number of other sacrifices. The worship of the gods of the puranic pantheon, specially Siva and his attendant deities, was very much in vogue.

The Vishnukundins described themselves as parama-brahmanas and granted to the brahmins agraharas, or land free from the payment of the taxes. Agraharas were granted to brahmins by the rulers for a definite purpose to enable them to devote themselves exclusively to the study and the teaching of the vedas, and perform sacrifices, which were believed to bring prosperity to the country and its people. The agraharas became centre of learning, and spread light and knowledge in the country. Both Indrabhattaraka and his son Vikramendra II actually styled themselves as "paramamaheswaras".²

The following names of the deities figure in the Vishnukundin ~~part~~ records.

I. "Sripurvathaswamin" in

Tummalagudem set II, Line 2,

Polyambur - Line 1

Chikkulla - Lines 1-2

Tundi- Line - 1

Ipur-I -- Line 6

Ipur II - Line 1

Ramathirtham - Line 1

II. i) Somagirisvaranatha - Chikkulla plates - Line 23

ii) Triymbaka " " " 22

III. "Vinayaka" - in Velpur inscription line - 16

i. 'Sriparvataswami' was their family deity. Some writers identified Sriparvataswami with the God Mallikarjuna (Siva of the modern Srisaillam)³

Another scholar viewed that it is doubtful whether Sriparvathaswami' in the title Sriparvatha-svami-pad-anudhyata refers to the God Mallikarjuna of Srisaillam in the Kurnool District, for ⁱⁿ the first place, there is no evidence to show that there existed at Srisaillam a shrine dedicated to Mallikarjuna or as to that matter any other deity at such an early date, and that as much Sriparvataswami to whose worship the Vishnukundins were devoted was to God Siva or what is more probable Kartikeya of Vijayapuri (Nagarjunakonda)⁴

It has already been mentioned that Sriparvataswami, the family deity of the Vishnukundins might be the Ramalingeswara swamy of Keesaragutta.⁵

ii. 'Somagirisvaranatha' that figures in Chikkulla plates indicated the worship of Siva with his consort parvathi. It may also denote Siva as the lord of the Moon (Soma) and Parvati.

Vikramendra Varman II issued this charter from his victorious camp at Lendulura which records the royal gift of the

village 'Regonram' to the Three eyed God (Triy ambaka) named Somagirisvaranatha (Siva).

iii. 'Vinayaka' the elephant faced God was also worshipped according to Velpur inscription during the period of Vishnukundins.

In one of the Vijayawada cave temples⁶ there is a figure of Ganapati in a niche. This deity has four hands and holds modaka in the lower right hand on which rests the tip of the trunk. Another figure of Ganapati is seen in one of the niches in cave No.2. This deity is seated with his left leg folded and resting on the seat and the right bent at the knee and upraised. In one of the niches in the east wall of cave IV of Mogalrajapuram there is a figure of Ganapati with the head of real elephant.

The popularity of the worship of that deity in much earlier times is known⁷. The elephant headed God Vinayaka is a non-Aryan divinity adopted into the Brahmanical pantheon not much earlier than the third or fourth century A.D.⁸ Ganapati is the lord of Genas. He is popularly known as Ganesa. Ganapati is also named Brahmanaspati or Lord of Magnitude.⁹ The elephant's head of Vinayaka was made the symbol of the inflated ego or the conscious "I", the first principle which emanated from the unmanifest Prajapati, for the simple reason that the elephant is of the most huge size amongst all creatures.¹⁰

Ganapati who is accepted by the Hindus as the son of Siva and Parvati was, as his name signified, placed in command of

the Ganas by his father. He is also called Vinayaka from his being associated with the Vinayakas reckoned among the Gods, and who are said to observe all the actions of men and remove evils. Another name under which he is worshipped is Vighneswara, as Siva is supposed to have charged him with the task of hindering wicked people from performing sacrifices and other various acts and of rendering assistance of good men in their endeavours to perform such acts by removing difficulties when he is Vighnahara.

His worship appears to have been introduced just at the point when he became the God of the sect known as Ganapatyas¹¹ and gained popularity under the patronage of the Vishnukundins.

iv. Nataraja from Vijayawada:

Cave II, which is the largest and most beautiful of all the caves in Mogulrajapuram is adorned with a fine figure of Siva as Nataraja with the portion below the waist broken. This deity is represented as dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmara purusha. He has eight hands.

There is another sculptured figure of Siva with four hands dancing on the prostrate body of the apasmarapurusa.

In his character as Nataraja, Siva is shown dancing in ecstasy to the accompaniment of sweet music and dancing the Tandava dance. Siva is said to perform this dance in the evening in the presence of Parvati seated on a diamond throne in order to relieve the sufferings on the devas. The dance of Nataraja is believed to symbolise the action of cosmic energy in creating, preserving, and destroying the visible universe.¹²

v. Durga:

The back wall of the cell of cave IV in Mogalrajapuram contains a shallow niche in which there is a half relief figure of Durga sculptured. This deity stands facing the right with her right foot resting on a small stool and the left stiff and resting on the ground. She has four hands, the upper right holding trisula, the lower right resting on the bent knee and the lower left in katihasta. The upper left hand is worne out.

Durga is one whom is "Beyond the reach".¹³ She is one, who destroys difficulty and affliction and also removes the terror. She has been described as assuming many forms out of one, besides the emanatory forms, which comes forth out of the Adisakti Mahalakshmi.¹⁴ The theory of incarnations has influenced in the course of development of Sakti pantheon.

(b) Saivism:

In the two varied kinds of phenomena which nature presents, the early habitants saw the power of the Omnipotent, but that which appeared to them to be terrible and disspiriting and wrought destruction they named Rudra. They also believed that the same power of the Almighty, which brought about ruin and destruction, was turned into a benignant deity if appealed and appeared by prayer, and so they named it Siva - the auspicious.¹⁵ In the Atharvanaveda, Siva is called Pasu-pati, meaning Lord of animals, thus forming a link between the Vedic Siva and Siva worship of later times. His worship suffused with feelings of intense love advocated under the imp^luse of

the teaching of Bhakti, which was then stimulating men's minds in carrying everything before it in matters of religion. Here he is the supreme lord to be worshipped with complete self-surrender, his devotee undertaking the observance of the Pasupata vow consisting in giving up anger and agreed, practising forgiveness and insisting upon the use of ashes signifying the transitoriness of all mundane things. In this may be discerned the germ of the Pasupata sect, which came into being in the early times, about 150 B.C.¹⁶

Just about the time, when the Pasupata sect was reorganised, a new school of thought in Siva worship became enshrined in books called the Agamas. The followers of the school were known as Maheswaras worshipping Siva under the name of Maheswara not differing much from the ancient Pasupata sect.

The earliest worshippers of Siva of whom mention is made in the Epics are the Pasupatas - followers of the Pasupata doctrine. Pasupata is formed from Pasupati - Lord of folks. Pati is the Lord, and man is the pasu, bound by the fetters of the world and requires to be released by the Lord. The doctrine was supposed to have been taught in the beginning by God Siva himself, namely, that Siva himself was the source of the whole creation and that final union with him should be the desired aim of his worshippers. The Pasupatas worshipped Siva in the form of the Linga, conceiving him as a deity of wild aspect as Bhairava, and they admitted even the gobins, ganas and others in their worship with him. They admitted all classes within their fold which accounts for a large following for the sect.

The doctrine of a new school of thought already in existence began to influence men's minds which subsequently became

enshrined in books called Agamas numbering about twenty-eight. The followers of these Agamas worshipped Siva mostly as Maheswara. The Agamas mark the appearance of Saktā ideas among the Saivites and contains rules regarding temple - building, image-making, and religious practices such as the wearing of the sect, mark, the Tripundra, and the belief generated in the efficacy of the use of mystic rites and charms. These hold that Siva possesses or develops in himself a Sakti or power consisting of the rudiments of the individual soul and the material world, and from this sakti, the world is developed. Man is by nature fettered by Ignorance, and kama - the material cause of the world. Man can, therefore, only be liberated by the grace of the Lord, which is also a product of Siva's sakti.

About the fourth century A.D. the doctrine of the Pasupata sect adumbrated in the Epics, made its appearance in the Vayupurana composed at that time, parts of which contain panegyrics and hymns in honour of the God under his names Maheswara and Nilakanta. From this time onwards, ^aSivism became the next dominant creed in the land, and counted all classes from princes and chiefs to ordinary individuals as its votaries, and the invocation addressed by the poets and men of letters of the times to God Siva at the beginning of their literary compositions.

This has greatly influenced the south Indian rulers of that period. Everywhere elaborate temples in honour of Siva were erected. Thus, the Pasupata sect, which has its beginning in the early epics, was reorganised about the second century A.D. and had gained popularity among the ruling classes as well as masses.

Another doctrine called "Panchayatana" came into vogue in the early years of Christian era. They observe the worship of five Gods, namely the Sun, Ganesh, Siva, Vishnu, Devi, but give preference to Siva.

The Kapalikas, not sufficiently distinguished from the Kalamukha, appear to be an old sect, almost coeval with the Pasupata sect. They indulged in rites and ceremonies of a very revolting nature, and they worshipped Siva in his fierce aspect as Bhairava. The Kalamukhs, maintained that for the attainment of desires in this world and the next, the votaries of Siva in his Bhairava aspect, should eat his food in a skull, besmear the body with ashes of a dead body, eat the ashes, hold a club, keep a pot of wine and worship the God. From their habit of eating their food in a skull and holding the club, they were easily and closely identified sometimes with the Pasupatas and sometimes with the Kapalikas.¹⁷

We have seen that some of the Vishnukundin monarchs were styled themselves as 'Parama-maheswaras' and that the family deity of the Vishnukundins was Sriparvataswamin. We have also seen that they worshipped Ganapati, Siva, Vishnu, Devi (Durga) as evidenced from the carvings of Vijayawada group of cave temples, with special preference to Siva, and that they built a number of temples throughout their kingdom, in honour of Siva which include innumerable miniature votive shrines found at Yeleswaram etc., and row of lingas at Keesaragutta. Though there are no direct evidences to show that the Vishnukundins worshipped 'Sun God' also it can be asserted with confidence that the worship of 'Sun' was also prevalent with the

in that period. Chitra Rathaswami the Sun God, was the tutelary deity of Salankayanas. There was a temple by that name at Vengi.

The foregoing evidences prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the Vishnukundin kings were the staunch followers of Pasupata sect - influenced by Agamas, and also patronised the doctrine of "Panchayatana".

(c) Siva Lingas on Keesaragutta:-

There is a live temple by name Ramalingeswara temple on the top of the hill and just opposite this temple, more than 70 lingas arranged in 4 rows with an intervening space of 3.5 metres are found. These Lingas were carved in black basalt with smoothly rounded top, octog^anal shaft and square base installed into brick courses measuring 50 x 25 x 8 cms. Bramasutras were incised over the Lingas in a typical shape. In the earlier phase, no stone panavatta were noticed. Besides the brick used for panavattas, a terracotta Linga recovered during excavations with a similar conical shaped Brahmasutras, is a clue to date the Lingas and the bricks used for pedestals to the early historical period.

Almost every pond of water over the hill had a Linga on one of its bank. Most of the Lingas were provided with brick pedestals and introduction of stone panavattas in the later period are noticed.

Brick is the most ancient material for a sacred building, Istikanyasa(the installation of the bricks) is performed as a part of the main foundation rite of the temple. Later on with the introduction of stone as building material the

Istikanyasa was substituted for Silanyasa in both secular and religious buildings.

The Samaranganasutradhara¹⁸ mentions about half a dozen substances of which the temples are made. On earth temples can be built, of any of these substances, stone, burnt brick, wood, cloth, bamboo and mud. "Mahanirvanatantra" says that it is 100 times more meritorious to give a brick temple than a thatched temple (i.e. wooden temples), 10,000 times more meritorious to give a stone temple than a brick temple.

Manasaras' classification of Lingas is the most scientific and it takes all the bases in its account. Samaranganasutradhara has devoted a separate chapter, a big one of more than three hundred lines to it (chapter 70).

Manusha lingas or man made lingas form the largest group of the Shtira-Lingas and are made up of three parts known as Brahmabhaga, Vishnubhaga and Rudrabhaga. The first in the square lowest section, the second the octagonal middle one, while the third or the top most one is generally cylindrical. Rudrabhaga is known also by the name of Pujabhaga, for the offerings of water, flower and other objects are usually put on its top; the two other sections are inserted inside the pedestal (pithika) and the ground.

Rudrabhaga of all the Manusha Lingas are carved certain lines called Brahma-sutras and the tops of the lingas technically known as Sirovartana are fashioned in a number of forms. As regards the brahmasutras, it is the tracing of certain lines on the Linga. These lines are also called laksanadharana, manirekha parsvasutra etc.¹⁹

Asthavara lingas or Achalalingas are broadly classified into four types viz., Svayambhuvas, Daivika, Ganapa and Arsa.²⁰

1. The Svayambhu Lingas are those that rose up and came into existence by themselves and had existed from times immemorial.

2. The Daivika Lingas are recognised, ~~according to Hindu texts,~~ by their characteristic shapes.

The Daivika Lingas do not possess the brahma or parsva sutras.

3. The Ganapa Lingas are those that are believed to have been set up by Ganas. They are of the shape of the fruits of cucumber, citron, wood apple, or palm.

4. The Arsa Lingas are those that are set up and worshipped by ascetics, they are spheroidal in shape, with the top portion less broad than the lower portion, in other words they are like an unhusked coconut fruit. The Ganapa lingas and the Arsa lingas like the Daivika Lingas are without Brahmasutras.

From the foregoing facts it can be deduced that the scattered and unsheltered Lingas over Keesaragutta are Manusha or man made Lingas carved by the artisans possessing full knowledge of Silpa sastra.

No Deva-puja is so old and so famous in India as that of Siva. Historically it is as old as the Indus valley civilisation. Siva - puja from the point of view of iconographical interest is of two kinds, one is symbolic - the phallus as an emblem i.e. the Linga puja and the other is anthropomorphic as of others.²¹

The great Siva devotee Bana, it is said, founded as many as fourteen crores of Siva-lingas which later became famous as Bana-Lingas.²²

Kurma Purana has an elaborate account of Linga-puja, its origin and development. The Vamana Purana has given the glorious descriptions of the famous ancient sites where the Siva-Lingas were founded.²³

Some times the worshipper himself was an image-maker. The temporary lingas made of clay, sand, rice curd, etc., used to be shaped then ~~the~~^{and} there; hence such productions were a part of daily routine in Indian life.

Worship as an institution is as old as the civilisation of mankind itself and it was a life-companion throughout the ages. The objects of worship or the symbols of worship have been different in different periods of human civilisation. Many a mountain has been our object of worship from times immemorial. It is mountains from where we have derived the worship of Salagramas and Bana Lingas, later on, deemed representatives of Vishnu and Siva respectively. This symbolism in worship is the fundamental fact of being grateful to an object which some way or the other has been conducive to the well being of human life and its primary necessities.

The Gods are installed not only in Tirthas, on banks of rivers, lakes and the sea-shores, at the confluence of rivers and estuaries, but also ~~hm~~ hill-tops and mountains slopes etc.,

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The Vishnudharmottara (Part III, chapter XC III-25-31) speaks of an installation of consecrated images (Arca),

"Installations should be made in forts, in auspicious cities, at river sides, in forests, gardens at the side of ponds, on hill-tops, in beautiful valleys and particularly in caves".

According to Mayamata ^{23(r)} stone is allowed to be used for temples by Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and hermits but one should not use it for Vaisyas and Sudras.

Stone when quarried and cut is an enduring and noble material, fit for gods, priests and the ruling classes.²⁴

It is seen from the Vishnudharmottara and other texts that the science of selecting and testing the stone is most developed where the stone has to be chosen for "Linga". Stone indeed is the aboriginal substance of the Linga. Gold, the purest of all substances is not considered in this respect, loses its value and is only given second consideration when a Linga is to be made.²⁵

The Linga Purana ^{25(r)} (chapter XLVII.5) speaks of a Linga made of gold and jewels, or of silver or copper, as alternatives only for the Linga made of stone, and which is the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Stone as menhir is specially connected with the Linga and also with the Adharasila.

Siva is preferred as Brahman or Truth in the Vedas and Upanishads and His form of Linga is worshiped.

There is only one God. Although he is one, people, have various notions about Him.

(d) Origin of Linga worship²⁶

The earliest references to Linga worship are to be found in the Rigveda, where the phallus is called "Sisnadeva", in the later or puranic period the references are more explicit.

"Markandeya Purana" says that Rudra and Vishnu are the creators of the universe and they form the Ardhanarisvara aspect of the former deity. The allusion is to the Haryardha form of Siva, in which the female generative principle is identified with Vishnu. That the male and the female principles are inseparable and are ever found together in cosmic evolution is the real import of the Ardhanariswara or Haryardha forms of Siva, the same idea is also conveyed in a brief way by the symbols "the linga" and the "Yoni".

The Linga-purana states that pradhana (nature) is called the Linga and Paramesvara is called the Lingin (the sustainer of the Linga) and that the pedestal of the Linga is Mahadevi (Uma) and the Linga is the visible Mahesvara. A more express allusion to the generative power of the Linga and the Yoni, the emblems of the Saiva cult, is found in the Vishnu-Purana, wherein we are told that Brahma asked Rudra, born of his anger, to divide himself; thereupon Rudra, divided himself into two, a male and a female portion.

We learn from the "Siddhanta Saravali" that the bringing about the union of the 'pitha' which is the symbol of Sakti and the Linga, that of Siva, in accordance with the rules laid down in Saiva Sastras is called pratishtha.

According to T.A.Gopinatha Rao²⁷ the most ancient Linga in Andhra Desa is the one at Gudimallam situated at a distance of about 20 kilometres from Tirupati. The Linga is known from ancient times by the name of Parasurameswara. The Linga is composed of two parts, the nut and the shaft of the

membrum virile, each of them shaped exactly like the original model, in a state of erection. The sculptor has modelled this Linga in imitation of the human phallus.

"There is very close resemblance of the figure of Siva on this Linga to that of a Yaksha in the Sanchi Stupa, figured on page 36 of Grunwedel's "Buddhist Art in India" (translated by Gibson and Burgess). The date of the sculpture has been presumed to be the second century B.C. but some scholars have disputed the date.

The two great Generative principles of the universe, Siva and Sakti, or Purusha and Prakriti, the father and mother of all creations, the energy and matter of the physical scientists is symbolised briefly in the form of the Linga and the Yoni. For the past two thousand years if not more the Hindus, males and females have been offering worship to this symbol of the Great Architect of the universe.

The worship of Linga and the Yoni is absolutely and thoroughly free from any kind of immorality or indecency.

This shows the significance and the place of Linga worship in the day to day life of the people as well as the rulers of early Andhra Desa particularly ^{the} Vishnukundins.

(e) Vaishnavism:-

We have seen that the Vishnukundin kings were staunch followers of vedic religion. In Tummalagudem copper plate III the names of Vaishnava deity like Vishnu²⁸, Govinda²⁹ are mentioned. Moreover the names of the Vishnukundin kings are

of Vaishnava gods, viz., Govindavarman, Madhavavarma, and the first part of their dynastic name 'Vishnukundin' refers to the Vaishnava god.

The royal emblem of the rulers was lion which is also a symbol of Narasimha, a man lion avatara of Lord Vishnu.³⁰ The Vishnukundin coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse. The head of a lion is depicted on the stone-plaque³¹ of mother-goddess found at Keesaragutta.

The Undavalli cave temples contain a huge figure of Vishnu Anantasayi. The pillars of the mandapa are adorned with sculptures viz., Gajendramoksa, lions, Vishnu, Varaha with Prithvi, Narasimha, Vamana and Bali, Trivikrama etc. The open portico before the mandapa contains on its eastern edge the figures of two lions, on the back wall of the mandapa are the figures of the devotees and fine figure of Vishnu seated on Sesha.

The nasika on the east in cave No.II at Mogalrajapuram contains three heads, representing Brahma, the central and western nasikas contain two heads each representing Siva and Vishnu with their consorts. There is a representation of Gajendra moksa on the first pillar in the front row to the east. To the right is Vishnu flying on Garuda, with two hands ~~on~~ resting on the head of the elephant and the other upraised. There is also sculpture showing Putana suckling Krishna.

There are two niches to the west of Cave IV of which one is empty and the other contains the standing figure of Vishnu, with four arms. The Central chaitya window of the Megalrajapuram

cave, contains the figure of Lakshmi-Narayana.³² We have already seen in the previous chapter that the early sculpture of Vishnu found at Yeleswaram and early-Narasimha sculpture of Kondamotu belong to Vishnukundin period.³³ The man-lion incarnation of Vishnu became popular in the early centuries of the Christian era. The fact that the 'Avatara' is often mentioned in early records as Simha instead of Narasimha may suggest that the deity was once conceived by some as having the form of a lion (not a combined form of man and lion)³⁴

But about the 4th century A.D. Vaishnavism and worship of Vishnu seems to have taken certain set forms due to the increasing influence of the bhakti cult.

One of the caves of Mogulrajapuram was dedicated to the Hindu Trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.

These evidences indicate that the worship of Vishnu was popular during the Vishnukundin period.

(f) Saktism:-

A mention has been made in the previous chapter³⁵ about the stone plaque of mother goddess found at Keesaragutta. This plaque of mother-goddess gives us to understand the religious beliefs of the people during the Vishnukundin period.

Cult of Mother Goddess:

Man's link with his mother is patent. Mother, who bears the child, nurses and rears it up, leaves a deep impress on its mind. It is but natural for the child to magnify her glory and power and to think of her as the representative of creative and sustaining forces of Nature. Perhaps since the child-hood of mankind similar psychological process prompted

man to deify mother. To a child, mother appears in different moods and forms. She loves and chastises the child as the occasion would demand. The attributes of the human mother are naturally ascribed to the Devine Mother and the Goddess too is conceived of in multifarious forms and moods.

The worship of Mother-Goddess is one of the earliest characteristics of human behaviour. The Mother Goddess holds high antiquity; it seems that She is the earliest manifestation of the divine principle to be represented in a visual form in bone, ivory, stone and bas relief with the maternal organs grossly exaggerated with pendulous breasts, broad hips, round buttocks and excessive corpulency suggestive of pregnancy.³⁶ Thus, her iconographic forms were fixed and individualised and she got the status of an ultimate Goddess or Universal Mother, responsible for giving life, vitality and prosperity. Some scholars³⁷ believe that the Indian nude goddess was a Goddess of Fertility and popular as a household goddess among the non-Aryan communities but later she became absorbed in the Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheons as Sakti and ultimately became identical with the Great Mother, the supreme Devi of the Tantras.

The worship of Mother Goddess received Brahmanical sanction by interpreting them as manifestations of Sakti personified in the aspect of the consort. At a level Sakti was interpreted as the eternal reproductive principle (prakriti) united with the eternal male principle (Purusa) in the generation of Gods and the universe.³⁸

The nudity aspect of the Mother-Goddess was an universal feature of the Mother-Goddess cult. This aspect is specially noticeable in the forms of Sabari, Parnasabari, Nagna-sabari, Aparna etc.,³⁹

It seems that the fusion of pre-historic Mother-Goddess tradition with the vedic goddess tradition relating to Vak and Sarasvati is greatly responsible for the prominence of Sakti cult in the post-vedic times. The identification of Rudra and Agni, the two Vedic Gods, inaugurated the process of fusion of Sakti and Siva (Rudra) cults,. The seven fierce goddesses such as Kali, Karala, Bhima, Chandi, Chamunda, etc.⁴⁰ identified with the seven tongues of Agni, became associated with Siva as the result of this fusion. All these Goddesses represented the destructive, terrible, fierce and wrathful aspects of the energetic female (Sakti). The peaceful and benevolent aspect of the goddess was promoted through the identification of Vedic Vak and Sarasvati with the Mother-Goddess.⁴¹

The exclusive worship of the female principle, as distinct from the Divinity seems to have had its germ in the idea that when the one personal God wills to put forth Energy for the purpose of creation, he is held to possess double nature partly male and partly female. The idea of the union of desire with God is exemplified by the concept of Heaven and Earth joining together and creating the Universe. We find this duality more clearly explained in the Brahmanas and Upanishads, for we find mention of the condition of the one Being unhappy without a second. He divided himself into two. Thus we have here a

distinct personality given to the power of God, which was named as Sakti.⁴²

Another set of notions of some antiquity, which contributed to form the notion of Sakti were derived from the teaching of the Sankhya system, which taught the separate existence of two principles Purusha and Prakriti, both coeval and co-existing independent principles, the play of which was deemed to be necessary for creation to take place.⁴³

Saktism in the bare acceptation of the term is worship offered to the supreme deity exclusively as a Female principle.

(g) Jainism:

On the top of the hill at Keesaragutta, there is a Jaina temple with a brick, square Garbhagriha, later adjoined with a mukhamandapa of granite pillars and roof slabs.

An early temple of Mahaveera with a sanctum, antarala and mukhamandapa, and the foundations of two more temples were cleared of debris at Gollathagudi, which revealed the complete plan of the sanctum with its lime plastered brick walls and the mukhamandapa. The excavations also yielded large number of Jaina sculptures. The excavations of Gollathagudi shed much light on the building activities of ancient Jains who preferred brick as their constructional medium to stone even while the contemporary Hindu temples were constructed purely in stone round about the region.

An inscription⁴⁴ of the Eastern Chalukyan king dated Saka 684 indicate that there was a Jaina establishment at Vijayawada

even before the Eastern Chalukyas entered the region i.e., during the time of Vishnukundins.⁴⁵

Jainism effected reforms by refusing to accept the divine authority of the Vedas, in presenting a common opposition to certain unreasonable practices of the Brahmins, in preaching that salvation was possible to all irrespective of caste and creed and in introducing the use of the vernacular in the addresses to the people in preference to the classical Sanskrit, which few could understand. Jainism is considered to be a reform movement against the unreasonable practices and teachings of the Brahmins, but it accepted the view then held on the theory of transmigration of the soul of man, that he is fettered to its mundane life by the laws of karma and that release from rebirth is obtained by man by means of the acquisition of right knowledge. For the attainment of this knowledge, it advocated the 'Sanyasa marga' on which much stress was already laid by the Upanishads, laying much emphasis on "asceticism consisting in subduing senses, withdrawing from wordly things, from communion with people, begging for alms, living in forests, observing cleanliness, internal and external, abstinence from injury to living beings, and sincerity, purity, freedom from envy, kindness and patience."⁴⁶

There is no wonder, a section of the people, though not all, became the followers of Jainism during the ^{period of the} Vishnukundin ~~monarchy~~, who were known for their religious tolerance.

(h). Buddhism:

As has already been stated there are ample evidences to show that Buddhism flourished along with other religions during the Vishnukundin period. Hiuen Tsang who visited the Andhra Desa after the disappearance of the Vishnukundins mentioned the existence of about twenty Buddhist monasteries.⁴⁷

Govindavarman, the donor of the Tummalagudem grant I, is stated to be the builder of Viharas, assembly halls and was the possessor of wealth enjoyed by the bhikshus. He made a gift of the village Ponakapara for a monastery built by his Chief queen Parama Mahadevi.

The words "Mahabodhichittena" and 'Bhagavato Dasa Balabalinah chatur-vvairsaredyashtadas - avenika Buddha-dharma Samalankruta". mentioned in the lines 12, 13-15 of the grant refers to Buddhism. Bodhi-chitt-otpada" is the mental disposition of one whose chief aim is enlightenment. Dasa-balas or the ten-fold forces of a Tathagatha, like Sthana-asthana-Janana-balam indicate the force of knowing possibilities and impossibilities.⁴⁸

The expression "uttapadita-mahabodhichitta" is based on the doctrine of Bodhisatva which is the keynote of the Mahayana teachings.⁴⁹ The inscription seems to suggest that the monks should have firm faith in the Buddha and in his teachings and should study the scriptures and practise meditation.⁵⁰

In Tummalagudem plate II, it is said that Govindavarman embraced Buddhism after studying the doctrines propounded

by the Buddha. Vikramendrabhattarakavarman made a gift of the village of Irenderu to the chaturdasa-arya-vara-bhikshu samgha residing in the mahavihara built by Parama-bhattarika, Vikramendravarman was a parama-saugata (devoted Buddhist). It is also stated in the above inscription that paramabhattacharika married Govindaraja who built in every vishaya in the Dakshinapatha wonderful stupas and Viharas adorned with several kinds of sculptural work by which he acquired brahma-punya. Govindavarman I accepted Buddhism after a study of shad-abhijna pratiharya darsana. Paramabhattacharika Mahadevi, his queen, was a devout follower of the Buddha.

Under the Vishnukundins Buddhism continued to lose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishnukundin rule.

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E. MATERIAL CULTURE

(i) POTTERY

The art of pottery making is interspersed with the social life of the man so much, as a result of which every age witnessed the silent and steady evolution of the pottery with its distinction. The archaeologists of today have recognised the importance of pottery in constructing the archaeological sequence of a site and have rightly termed it as "Alphabet of Archaeology".¹

The pottery evidence from Keesaragutta is very significant. The excavations yielded pottery associated with the structures in the palace complex consisting of red ware, dull red ware, and black grey ware. Some fragments of blotchy red ware also have been recovered. The entire pottery is wheel-made. The paste, as a rule, is medium, sometimes coarser, tempered with sand which often contains larger particles of grit. Usually no surface wash is met with and, wherever available, it approximates to the colour of the paste. A pleasing effect is produced on some of the vessels by mixing powdered mica in the paste or dusting it on the pots before firing. Vases are usually more absorbent. The firing is good, but instances of deformed pots due to unequal or bad firing are also noticed.

The fabric ranges from coarse to medium; some sherds of fine fabric have also been recovered.

The red-ware, both slipped and unslipped, is generally wheel-turned and has many shapes. These include vases, bowls,

disches and miniature pots, storage jars etc.

The vases, mostly unslipped, are with flared rims, convex bottoms and outer surfaces corrugated; conical bowls and lid-cum-bowls are with featureless rims, and some are with flaring body. Handi type of globular miniature pots with featureless rim and with conical base, spouted miniature pots with a sharp out-curved rim, recurring type of pots with concave neck, and sharp everted flat rim, are also found. Storage jars are with a prominent straight sided neck and with grooved rims devoid of any surface treatment. Lids are cupola shaped with carinated bottom and with a knob at the crest. Some lids are circular hat shaped and some are bell shaped with bottom like knob and carinated base.

Decorations are also met with. They comprise applied, incised and stamped patterns. The incised designs, usually confined to the external surface of the pots, consist of rope bands, chevrons, floral and creeper patterns. The designs are mostly geometric and linear, consisting of parallel bands on the shoulder.

All the pots are grouped according to their utility for the better understanding of the culture trait of the people. The pottery can be further classified into utilitarian and ritualistic.

A. Storage jars:-

Jars are available in red ware, and coarse dull red ware. Among the red ware storage jars, the first type has a prominent straight sided neck with grooved rims, fine fabric devoid of

any surface treatment. This was probably used as "Ghata" to carry and also to store water. The second type is of a coarse dull red ware with incised triangular motif below the ridged neck portion, incisions probably stamped, inside the motifs are linear incisions stamped at regular intervals.

The third type is a huge storage pot with a narrow out-turned and constricted rim, top portion of the rim is grooved below which are obliquely incised patterns. There are three reliefs just below the rim. First relief contains thin lined groovings below which are crescent shaped nail impressions a few inches below it is another relief curvilinear triangles with similar technique. The red slip is visible outside and partly inside.

The fourth type has a thick out-curved rim. The edge of the rim is incised with oblique rope pattern(bands). There are also grooved linear parallel bands all along the neck portion. Below this are incised inverted triangle with linear incisions within them. These triangles are arranged in a panel like form.

The fifth type has two bands of rope designs with oblique incisions.

The sixth type is of blotchy red ware and has a flared rim and the rim top contains circular motifs of rosettes rim tapering, below the ridged neck portion are incised chevron-shaped designs and nail head section.

The seventh type is a red ware pot with a petal shaped design.

The eighth type has a flaring rim with applied protruding circlets over the rim surface. This is illfired.

The ninth type is without curved rim. Its neck portion is decorated within two reliefs with nail incisions ⁱⁿ linear patterns.

The tenth type has constricted flat rim of coarse grained fabric. There is a grooved line all along the outer edge of the rim. No surface treatment is given.

These jars were probably used for storing grains and other food stuffs for daily consumption as well as to keep sufficient stocks in reserve for use during the times of war or any such emergency as is evident from the place these fragments were found.

B. Ornamental jars:-

These are the jars available in red-ware; fabric ranging from coarse to medium. The first type has a outcurved rim. The designs are divided into two compartments separated by a ridge just below the outer rim and there are incised wavy designs extended all along. Just below the ridge there are applied and stamped uniform motifs. They must have been used for keeping valuables and rare articles by the members of the royal family who lived in palaces as this type of jars are profusely and attractively designed.

The second type is of a red-plished ware. It has designs incised with chevrons, floral and creeper patterns.

The third type is a coarse red-ware pot with a floral design probably stamped.

The fourth type has relief showing incised chevron shaped motifs with dotted lines. Outside surface is given slipped treatment.

The above three jars appear to be of aesthetic type and predominantly used for beauty sake by the women-folk of the royal families.

C. Vessels:-

Vessels are available in red ware, dull ware and pinkish red ware. The fabric varies from fine to medium. Some are red-slipped.

The first type is a carinated handi with a curved rim with soot marks at the bottom portion. No surface treatment was given.

The second type is similar to the first type but smaller in size with a flared rim. There is incised decoration just above the carination in the form of wavy triangular patterns.

The third type is a small handi. Soot marks are present all along the base. The red-slip is visible outside. Section is in the shape of inverted 'S'.

These appear mainly, to be cooking pots. The first type may have been used for storage of cooked food, as the rim is broad; the second type for storing sweetmeats or delicious food stuff and the third type for storing cooked food or heating it.

D. Conical Bowls:-

Three types of conical bowls have been found and they are also available in red-ware and pinkish redware. The first type has a featureless rim with flat base. The second type is similar to the first type but slightly irregular in shape. Its fabric also is finer. The third type has a flaring body with a flat bottom.

These bowls were probably used for holding gruel or semiliquid substances.

E. Miniature pots.-

Handi type globular miniature pots are available in dullredware only. The pots have small featureless rim and conical base devoid of any surface treatment. Another pot has a round base with a faint surface treatment in the form of grooved bands. The shape and the size of these pots indicate that they were used for holding liquids etc., for ritualistic purposes.

F. Spouted miniature pots:-

A spouted miniature pot with a sharp outcurved rim, globular in shape has been found. Its fabric is coarse and the surface treatment is very faint. This type of pots could have been used to pour milk or ghee for ablutionary purposes.

G. Small Jars:-

Small jars are available in black and red-ware with fine fabric and also in red-ware. The first has a deep and flat body with wide bottom slightly carinated in the middle.

The rim is everted. Grooves are present on the top and at the neck portion of the rim. It is slightly polished and burnished. Another type is a concave necked handi type of pot with sharp everted flat rim-nail shaped in section. Bands on the concave portion of the neck are present. The fabric is coarse. It is a slightly self-slipped red-ware which is ill-burnt.

These jars appear to have been used for domestic as well as ritualistic purpose to store grain or liquid or any hot preparations.

H. Vases:-

Vases have been found in red-ware only; one type has flared rims and hollow bottom. Outer surface is carinated. The bottom is convex and there is a provision for a stand which is apparently missing. This deep vase could have been used as pitcher, liquid container, or for incense burning.

I. Lid-cum-bowl:-

Only two specimens of this type are found. They are available in coarse red-ware and dull red-ware. The first has featureless rim with carination at the neck portion. No surface treatment is given. The diameter of the lid-cum-bowl is 15 cms.

The second one is a small hollow lid of fine fabric devoid of any surface treatment.

Bowls appear as common variety of the period and probably were used as dining sets.

J. Beaker:-

One pinkish grey ware beaker type of pot of medium fabric has been found in the temple complex. It has everted sharp rim and flat base, slightly bulging in the middle. There are grooves at the shoulder region. The height of the beaker is 11 centimetres. This type of beakers were used to pour ablutions for the ritualistic purposes or for drinking purpose.

K. Dish on Stand:-

Stand bases are available in coarse fabric. The first type has a very flat topped concave stand base. Inside is hollow. No surface treatment is seen.

The second type is also similar in fabric with no surface treatment. The top is flat with a perforation.

These stand bases must have been used for holding big pots, images, etc.,

L. Lids:-

The lids are available in red ware only. The first type is a cupola shaped hollow lid with carinated bottom. There is a knob at the crest.

The second type is a circular hat shaped lid with button shaped knob. It has a hollow bottom with notched edge.

The third one is a bell shaped lid with a worn out button like knob and carinated base; body slightly wobbling. These types of lids could have been used as finials.

The fourth type is similar to that of the other types but with a better treatment in fabric and finishing. Carination at the bottom is pronounced. The lid has a nipple shaped knob (Washed red ware). This must have been used as a cover on a small pot.

M. Sprinklers:-

Three types of sprinklers have been recovered during the excavations.

The first type is a bottle-necked sprinkler with a flanged rim top, and a conical knobbed opening with a perforation at the top running through the neck. Of consistently fine fabric, it is treated externally with a bright-red slip. This is similar to samain ware. This type is fairly widespread and occurs at Arikamedu,² Brahmagiri,³ Chandravalli,⁴ Yeleswaram,⁵ Hastinapura,⁶ Kausambi,⁷ etc.,

The second type has a flanged rim top without any knob, body tapering, fine fabric with red slip, probably intrusive ware.

The third type is similar to type two but with wide rim top, washed red ware of medium fabric.

The first type of sprinkler must have been used for attaching it to "poornaghata" or any such auspicious pot either for aesthetic or for religious purposes. The other two types appear to be of purely decorative pieces.

N. Spouts:-

The spouts are available in two types all in red-ware.

(1) simple and tubular and the other (2) truncated type.

The first one is a polished red-ware with a fine fabric. It has wide bulbous body resembling the trunk of a sphinx. This is a unique spout unlike other ordinary spouts both in technique and finishing. Similar spouts were also found in Yeleswaram.⁸

The second type has a projecting conical hind part, and perforations at the proximal end with a wide cup-shaped opening at the distal end. Probably mould made; fabric well levigated, highly red polished.

It is quite probable that the above two types might be imported one.

The third one is a spout of inferior fabric and illfired with a wide tubular channel. There are decorations of white dotted patterns of doubtful import.

The fourth type has tapering body and smaller than the other types. Medium fabric.

The fifth one is also a small spout with a lipped distal end and a wide trunk. The occurrence of the spouted vessels is noticed at Luristan⁹, Nal¹⁰, Jahanjhmer¹¹, Brahmagiri¹², Nagarjunakonda¹³, Tekkalkota¹⁴, and Piklihal¹⁵.

These spouts might have served for regulating the flow of liquids. Spouts are luted on vessels, basins and bowls. All these spouts are hand made and have been luted with the vessels. After the spout has been luted, a hole has been punched at the joint in order to pour liquid from the vessels.

R.C.Prasad Singh¹⁶ mentions the usage of spouted vessel for religious function. "A sanskrit text - kriya kanda Varidni" written in Bengali script refers to Vardhani, vessel

with spout. The vessel is used in the chatus astipada vastu Yajna. According to the text, vardhani is tied around the neck of the pitcher used as kalasa. Another reference from the same text suggests that water should be poured into specially dug ditch in order to check the auspiciousness of the land under construction. Tying of vardhani around the neck of the pitcher and pouring of water through them suggest religious function. The word 'pranali' standing for spouted vessel, occurs in the Sruta-sutra and through these pranalis some used to be offered to the gods in the Vedic sacrifices.

Vessels must have been used by the royal families of the Vishnukundin dynasty for some such religious functions following the Vedic traditions.

O. Decorated Pottery:-

R.C. Agarwal¹⁷ rightly observed that the early centuries of the Christian era in India are marked by the appearance of embossed or decorated pottery in sufficient quantity.

An interesting specimen of a dull red ware globular pot with a lid profusely decorated with snakes and human like figures, has been recovered out side the Garbhagriha of the temple structure at the north-west corner of the antarala during the recent excavations at Keesaragutta. This is very significant since this type of pot has not been found in any

other excavations so far carried out by this Department of Archaeology and Museums Andhra Pradesh

It is a globular vase with flat out curved rim and narrow neck. The circumference of the vase is about 80 cm, and its height including lid is 37 cms. Five terracotta human like

figurines encircled by serpents ^{one} ~~are~~ placed on the belly of the pot at equal distances in a sitting posture resting their hands on the knees. The lid is also decorated with a figurine surrounded by a snake; the hood of the snake is broken. The size of each figurine is 8 cm. The head of one of the figurines is broken. The belly of the pot is decorated with seven serpents in their full length beautifully moulded exhibiting artistic skill. All the figurines appear to be of females with demonical features.

Its purpose and usage is shrouded in mystery. Nevertheless, it is not very difficult to unravel the mystery from the available literary evidences.

The snake is accepted by many scholars as being intimately connected with fertility cult since times immemorial.¹⁸ Vogel says that in the whole of western and southern India the cobra is worshipped upto the present day by women, who are desirous of offspring.¹⁹ According to Hendrik kern²⁰ the Nagas are essentially water spirits and they are to be regarded as personified forces of nature; in the first instance the snake like coiling rain-clouds emitting flashes of lightning the serpents of the sky-which are transported to the lakes and pools on earth and finally are "confounded" with real poisonous snakes. Kern's view emphasizes at any rate a very important aspect of Naga worship, viz., the close relationship between the Nagas and the elements which in a hot country like India is of such vital significance for human and animal existence.

We often find a snake encircling a linga on the yoni-patta, or otherwise lying in it at the narrower end of the yoni-patta. The cult of earth goddess is associated with snake symbols.

~~Capt.~~ J. Mackenzie says "that in Gawripuja, women of all Hindu classes and creeds" adore the serpent, as it is supposed to remove their barrenness.^{22 21}

The Goddess is to be invoked, according to some Tantrik text, as Gauri, Gandhari, Matangi, etc. in connection with snake bites, when some paste of the leaves of certain medical herbs mixed with the juice of Kumari plant is to be smeared, in the Uda-Kumbha vidhana ceremony. The serpent is always the Agathodaemon, the bringer of health and good fortune.²²

The practice of adoration of the serpent is very primitive in India and it has some Vedic association also. In Grihyasutras 'Sarpabali' is one of the many house-hold rites and its performance an annual rite- prolonged for no less a period than the four months of the rains, is reminiscent of the popular naga-worship in many parts of India.²³

Naga cult in Buddhism during Satavahana period is also noteworthy. Serpents are represented as entwining stupas. Both at Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, the Buddha is represented as seated on Nagas with their hoods just above his head. The snake cult was so widely prevalent in these parts of Andhradesa.

The exact usage of this pot is not known but it proves beyond any reasonable doubt that the pot maker or his masters who wanted him to make such a pot were inspired by the Naga-cult.

YELESWARAM

Yeleswaram pottery is not only striking and significant but also very much variegated, drawing parallels from many important early historical sites excavated in India. The entire collection of pottery appears to be of wheel made with the fabric ranging from fine to coarse. Red ware pottery is mostly slipped. During the early part of this period, say upto 4th century A.D. dull red ware of Ikshvaku period continued by the Grey ware emerged and predominated this pottery. Red polished ware and black and red ware were conspicuous by their absence after the termination of Ikshvaku period.²⁴

The following are some of the specimens of pottery that were recovered from layer IV assigned to ^{the} Vishnukundin period.

1. A small vase of red ware with a rounded body having a thickened rim externally grooved. It had deep grooves in the neck and on the shoulder.
2. A big red ware water-pot with a globular body and grooved flat undercut rim. In the neck also it was decorated with horizontal grooves.
3. A red ware pot with a hole for a spout
4. A carinated lid of dull red ware with a closing and slightly everted rim having a sharp flange in the waist. It had deep grooves in the neck. Two types have featureless rims whereas one type was devoid of grooves. Similar types were recorded at Arikamedu, Brahmagiri and Maski.
5. A grey ware spouted vessel with a rounded body having sagger base.

6. A grey ware vessel with an externally thickened rim.
7. A dull red ware lid with closing featureless rim, flanged waist and a solid knob. It contained a hoard of 49 Vishnukundin coins. Similar types were recovered in later periods as well, treated with lime or yellow colour.
8. A grey ware lid with a hollow stand (must be finial).
9. A small grey ware bowl with grooves,
10. A grey ware miniature lid cum bowl with flanged rim.
11. A red ware conical bowl with a flat base irregular shape.
12. A dull red ware lower part of dish on a stand with curved edge at the bottom coarse fabric.
13. A dull red ware fragment of dish on stand with soot marks in the disc-coarse fabric.
14. A polished red ware fragment of carinated handi with an out turned rectangular rim having sharp carination in the waist, polished red ware.

A fragment of a redware storage jar is met with in the recent excavations at Keesaragutta. There is applique design probably of an animal leg. The fabric is coarse and may be classified under decorated pottery.

Nelakondapalle

Fragments of red polished ware and red slipped ware of coarse to fine fabric have been met with during the excavations at Nelakondapalle. First type of storage jar has a usual rim, the lower portion of the rim is decorated with ropy design. Second type has a plain flat out-turned rim, below the rim is decorated with horizontal grooves. Third type has a splayed

rim with horizontal grooves on the body. The first type must have used as a jar for storing grains etc., and the other two types for storing water.

Fourth type is a large storage jar with oval shaped body probably with a rounded base without-turned rim, horizontal grooves on the edges of the rim and below the rim of the jar. The neck portion of the jar contains rope design.

Another type is a thick fragment of a vessel with flat out-turned rim and a loop design on the rim. The fabric is coarse and it is red slipped. Similar pottery is found at Keesaragutta, Yelleswaram etc.

(i) Iron objects:

Nails, knives, arrow heads, sickles are some of the iron objects that have been recovered from the excavations at Keesaragutta.

A flat iron piece with rivet measuring about eleven centimetres length and three centimetres breadth has been found. This piece might have been used as hinges for the door.

An iron spear head or of a similar weapon has also been met with. It is 12.5 centimetres in length including one centimetre long pointed part at the tail end, and one centimetre width in the middle.

Another iron object $5\frac{1}{2}$ centimetres long, slightly bulging in the middle and pointed at both ends has been met with.

(ii) Beads:

For an archaeologist, beads are valuable because they serve as a valuable source of information in tracing the influence of one culture on the other particularly in ancient times.

A number of beads have been recovered from the excavations at Keesaragutta. The beads are made of terracotta and precious stone. The shapes of terracotta beads are pear, spherical, amalaka, and tabloid. But for a cylindrical amethyst bead, beads of precious stone are rare.

Similarly, a good variety of beads of terracotta and semi-precious stones have been brought to light at Yelanwaram. Terracotta was most popularly used in manufacturing beads. A variety of shapes such as barrel shaped, globular, discoid and faceted were noticed and all of them had as usual tranversed holes,. The favourite type appeared to be long barrel cylinder.

iii) Bangles:

A few Bangle pieces have also been found at Keesaragutta. Some of the bangles made of shell are beautifully incised with concentric grooves and others are plain.

iv) Stone objects:

The stone objects found at Keesaragutta include a polished linga about 8½ centimetres long with a diameter of 3 centimetres. The top is round and the base is flat so as to insert into a pedestal.

Another object found associated with the Linga is a conical bowl with perforation at the tip and the two perforations at the rim. It was probably suspended in the inverted position for letting down drops of water over the Linga.

A head of a miniature female sculpture was found with bulbous eyes, her hair tied with a wavy fillet in the middle are made into a top knot. The sculpture was made of black

basalt. There is also a small stone boat about 13 centimetres long possibly used for grinding spices or ingredients of tilak etc. A part of the boat is broken and missing.

A stone-plaque of Mother-Goddess is described separately (Part II c. Arts).

The large number of Siva-lingas carved out of stone beautifully and artistically go to show that "Keesaragutta" was a manufacturing centre of Siva Lingas for exporting them to various places in the country during the Vishnukundin period. The Siva Lingas on Keesaragutta and their significance has, however, been dealt in detail elsewhere.*

v) Idols etc.

About ten idols which are detailed below were discovered at Nelakondapalle in the course of digging for pati earth

1. a) Buddha (standing	1'.9" x 10"
b) Legs and hands broken	
b) Head	8" x 7"
2. a) Buddha (standing)	2'.8" x 1'.3"
Broken hands & legs	
b) Head	11" x 9"
3. a) Buddha (standing)	2'.4" x 10"
Hand broken	
b) Head	7" x 6"
4. a) Buddha (standing	2'.2" x 10"
b) Head	10" x 9 1/2"
5. Buddha (standing)	2'.9" x 1'.3"
Head	10" x 9 1/2"

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| 6. Buddha (standing) | 1'.8" x 9" |
| Head | 10" x 9½" |
| 7. Buddha (standing) | 2'.8" x 1'.4½" |
| Head | 9½" x 10" |
| 8. Buddha (standing) | 2'.4" x 9" |
| Complete shape except broken hands: | 2'.4" x 9" |
| 9. Buddha (standing) | 2'.11" x 1'.2" |
| without legs | |
| 10. Broken pieces of Padma pedestals | 9 Nos. |

All the idols are decorated with Tila mark on the forehead and on stylistic grounds are datable to third century A.D.

The pit where the idols were discovered was extended and tub like brick structures three in alignment separated by a drain were brought to light. Number of broken fragments essential for moulding the broken idols, and a very interesting brick structure relating to the manufacture and preservation of the marble Buddhist idols were traced out. The trough measuring 4.45 metres x 1.96 metres x .80 metre appears to have been intended for preserving the idols under lime plaster and that they were given high polish later.

On the basis of the availability of lime-stone and marble deposits in the vicinity, number of brick tubs and fragments of Buddhist idols traced during the course of archaeological operations at Nelakondapalli, it may be concluded, that it was a manufacturing centre of Buddhist idols of different sizes and that the idols were exported to various other places in the country.

iii) COINAGE

A collection of 868 Vishnukundin coins preserved in the A.P. State Museum at Hyderabad have been examined by Dr.M.Rama Rao and he has described some of them in the catalogue.²⁵ All the coins are of copper and round in shape. These coins were obtained from Tangutur in Bhongir taluk of Nalgonda district and from Telkunta in the Sultanabad taluk of Karimnagar district. These coins contain a lion inside a circle on the obverse and a vase or kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse. Elliot²⁶ described two coins of the above type. Dr. M. Rama Rao has divided the coins into twelve varieties basing on the symbols on the obverse of the coins.

1. Well decorated lion facing left with the double ya symbol and crescent above and with the left fore-paw raised.
2. Animal as above with mouth open.
3. Animal as above sparsely decorated.
4. Animal as in No.2 with symbols before the mouth
5. Animal facing left with mouth open, tail curled above, left forepaw raised and double ya symbol above.
6. Animal facing left with mouth open, tail uplifted and left forepaw raised.
7. Animal as above with crescent above and double ya symbol before the mouth.
8. Animal facing left with open mouth, tail uplifted, left fore-paw raised and double ya symbol before the mouth.
9. Animal as above with a symbol before the legs.

10. Big bold animal facing left with mouth open, double ya symbol before the mouth, tail uplifted, left forepaw raised and symbols before the legs
11. Animal as above with crescent above.
12. Animal as above with symbols before and between the legs.

On the reverse a vase or vase like symbol in one pellet with two straight horizontal lines and a pellet above etc., are noticed. The most curious feature of the symbol on the reverse side is that starting as a vase or kalasa on two slender legs with two lines and a pellet above and with a lamp stand on either side, all inside a rayed circle, it culminates in a well formed sankha passing through several intermediate forms.

This type of coins were attributed to Pallavas,²⁷ which was proved to be untenable and wrong.²⁸ The Vishnukundins issued a variety of coins. The round double die struck copper coins are generally found in coastal Andhra, Telangana, Vidarbha and Maharashtra. Two coins have been published with the following description.

"A well decorated lion facing right with gaping mouth, curled up tail, left fore-paw raised are found on the obverse, the sacred kalasa on a stand flanked by lamp stands on either side are seen on the reverse of the coins. The lion with all its vigour portrayed on the obverse invariably found on the coins, leads one to think that they have made it a dynastic crest, the lion symbolising the power. The reverse of the coins has a spiritual content. The flaming lights whose rays spread all over the world, meaning the diffusion of knowledge. The sacred kalasa standing on a pedestal in the centre contains the

water of life, purity and fertility which is a symbol of prosperity of Vishnukundin rule. But they bear no legend on them.²⁹

It is further reported that two unique coins with legends bearing the names of Indravarma and his son Vikramendravarma whose inscriptions were found near Tummalagudem, a place ^{32 km} 20 miles away from Bhongir, were collected in the neighbourhood of Bhongir. The tiny coin of Indravarma measuring 7 cm. dia. is stated to contain all the features of the commonly found coins described above, and that the letters of the legend are so artistic and commendable of the engravers art on such a mini coin. It is further described that the other coin of Vikramendravarma contained the legend in Brahmi script(?). The size of the coin is given as 1.5 cms.³⁰

There is no dispute in accepting that the above two coins are of Vishnukundins but the legend part of it is doubtful, in view of the fact that not even a single coin containing clear legend out of thousands of Vishnukundin coins discovered so far, has been met with. Further there is no reason to believe why the weak Indravarma and Vikramendravarma alone should issue coins in their name while the powerful monarchs like Madhavavarman, Indrabhattarakavarma did not do so.

A coin within a circle with pellets round, lion and tail downward to right on the obverse, and "within broad circle of radiating lines was" on a stand between two tripod lamp stands or standards" was found in Prakash excavations³¹, on the banks of river Tapati. This coin is attributed to the Vishnukundins.³²

An exceptionally large number of Vishnukundin coins has been reported from several ancient sites in Maharashtra. At

first glance they give an appearance of being copper coins and look rather heavy in proportion to their size. But a recent metallurgical analysis has revealed a peculiarity of their composition in as much as they comprise an iron core with the coating of a thin sheet of copper on the surface.³³ Kautilya's Arthasastra says that copper coins made up of four parts of an alloy shall be a mashaka, half a mashaka, kakani, and half a kakani. This alloy shall be made up of four parts of silver, eleven parts of copper, and part of tikshana or any other metal.³⁴

A solitary coin was recovered in the course of archaeological excavations at Brahmapuri. It bears a lion to the right on one side and jar flanked by a trident on either side within the rayed circle on the other.³⁵ A couple of coins recovered in the excavations at Nevasa in the Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra, bear a lion standing facing right, in its front, a vertical linear staff with a thick dot capping it, all in a circle on the obverse, and a vase on a stand between two posts on each side, the entire motif in a circle with radiating lines on the reverse.³⁶ Following ~~Walter~~ Elliot, ~~Vincent~~ A. Smith and other earlier numismatists, these coins were assigned by the excavators to the Pallavas. But these coins are now commonly accepted to have been issued by the Vishnukundins.³⁷

The new varieties were unearthed at Paunar in the Wardha district, their obverse has the figure of a well-decorated lion to the right with gaping mouth, curled up tail and left forepaw raised within a circle inside a dotted border or in a rayed circle, while the reverse show either the axle of a wheel and

a crescent with a dot placed on it in each of the four corners or a conch-shell decorated with some fillet-like objects within a radiated circle.³⁸ Another Vishnukundin coin of the common type with lion on the obverse and a vase-on-stand flanked by the figures of a trisula on either side, on the reverse, was reported from a place near Nagpur³⁹.

The biggest hoard of over three hundred Vishnukundin coins was discovered at Paunar in the Wardha district. They bear a lion on the obverse and an axle in relief, or a conch-shell or a vase-on-stand, all in a circle with radiating strokes, on the reverse.⁴⁰

In the recent years a hoard of Vishnukundin coins have been reported from Ramathirtham of Vizianagaram district in Andhra Pradesh. A coin has been recovered in course of archaeological excavations at Nelakondapalli of Khammam district. A hoard of 273 Vishnukundin coins have been recovered from near the Sri Ramalingeswaraswamy temple at Kesaragutta while digging a trench for extension works of the temple. All these coins are of copper and round in shape. The coins bear a squatting lion with a spiralled tail and raised forepaw on the obverse, a poornaghata flanked by two lampstands all enclosed in rayed circle on the reverse. None of these coins bear any legend.

It is not known as to why the Vishnukundins did not like to issue their coins with legend though they were learned monarchs and were praised with long epithets in their inscriptions. In the absence of any archaeological or

epigraphical evidences, it may not be proper to come to any conclusion why the Vishnukundins dispensed with the minting of coins with the legends unlike their predecessors and contemporary dynasties like Satavahanas, Pallavas, etc., But it may not be unreasonable to think that the Vishnukundins were confident that the conspicuous and significant symbol adopted in their coinage viz., the lion on the obverse and a kalasa flanked by two lamp stands, all enclosed in a rayed circle on the reverse, itself would stand for their dynastic appellation so far as their coinage was concerned.

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F. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DURING THE VISHNUKUNDIN PERIOD

The Vishnukundin polity conformed to the rule laid down in the Sastras; its keynote was the sovereign. Monarchy was hereditary. "Except in times of danger, sovereignty fell to the lot of the eldest (son) is always respected. Sovereignty may (some times) be the property of the clan, for the corporation of clans is invincible in its nature and being free from the calamities of anarchy, can have a permanent existence on earth," says Kautilya.¹ The king was the commander in war and led his armies personally to the battle field. Indrabhatteraka is said to be the victor in innumerable chaturdanta battles.² The kings of the dynasty were engaged almost constantly in wars both defensive and offensive. As the guardian of the social and religious order, the king's "fearless hand" was to be wet by "the water poured out to impart fearlessness". He was to prevent "the contamination of the four castes". The true father of his people, he should sympathise with "the weal and woes of his citizens" and "never employ taxes except in conformity with justice". He was to be the "furtherer of the homesteads of the low as well as of the twice-born. He should properly "devise time and place for the triple object of human activity". A king educated in these precepts among a moralising people would have been more than human if he had escaped the obsession of this conception of his duties.³

Social Conditions:

The fourfold division of society - the caste system - prevailed in the Andhra Desa during the Vishnukundin period.

We hear Govindavarman's charities and gifts to numerous Brahmins. He protected the varnas and asramas and patronised the brahmins. Their love for brahmins may have been due to the fact that they were themselves Brahma-kshatras. The Brahmins of the south in the early centuries of the Christian era had converted members of the ruling class into kshatriyas, inducing them to perform yagnas and conferring on them the onerous task of protecting dharma.⁴ The advent of the land grants in the south, first made fashionable by the Chalukyas, Pallavas and Kadambas, witnessed a new age when the monarch began to lean more heavily on the Brahman settlers for the maintenance of law and order. These monarchs also contributed, inadvertently, to the liquidation of royal power through the alienation of basic functions like those of the enforcement of law and the collection of revenue. The story of land grant system as revealed in epigraphs will supply us an important aspect of social history connected with the role of Brahmin settlements in feudal formations all over India.⁵ Agraharas were granted to brahmins by kings to enable them to devote themselves exclusively to the study, and the teaching of the Vedas and perform sacrifices, which were believed to bring prosperity to the country and its people. The agraharas became centres of learning and spread light and learning in the country.

With their long historical prefaces and elaborate instructions for maintenance, the epigraphs supply many hints about political organisation and economic arrangements. Inscriptions of post-Mauryan period are connected by and large, with

Brahmanical or Jain-Buddhist settlements or political commercial centres and reflect their elitist culture. Therefore the direct information which they supply is limited to royal and ecclesiastical sectors of life. Vast areas of social activity lying outside them are naturally precluded from appearing in our epigraphic records except in terms of indirect and casual reference.

Women occupied a prominent position in Society. The idea of woman being the chattel of her lord with no rights and privileges which make life worth living, was quite alien to the Vishnukundin period. Paramabhattarika Mahadevi, daughter of Prithvimula, and the Chief Queen of Govindavarman was a worthy spouse of her husband. She built a spacious Vihara at Sakrapura for the use of the bikshus of Chaturdasarya-varasangha and persuaded her husband to grant the village Penukaparu for the repairs and white-washing of the monastery and for providing the comforts such as food, drink, couch, lamps, incense perfume and medicine of the resident monks.⁶

A miniature stone sculpture of a lady⁷ with head and bulbous eyes, hair tied with a wavy fillet in the middle and made into a topknot found at Kesaragutta, indicates the hair dress of the women folk during that period. Men and woman wore ornaments. Ear spools of various sizes made of terracotta found at Kesaragutta and Yeleswaram at the early historical levels show that the women were fond of ear ornaments. Strings of beads were also worn by them. The beads found at Kesaragutta are made of terracotta and precious stone. The shapes among the terracotta beads are pear, spherical, amalaka and tabloid.

Similar variety of beads of terracotta and semiprecious stones were brought to light at Yeleswaram also.

Names:

Almost all the names of the Vishnukundin rulers end with the suffix "Varma" viz., Govindavarma, Madhavavarma, Vikramendrarvarma, Indrabhattarakavarma,. Like Pallava kings and the Brihatphalayana king Jayavarman, and Salankayanas, the Vishnukundins have their name ending in 'Varma' and does not bear a metronymic.⁸ 'Bhattaraka' is a title applied to priests.⁹ Fleet has pointed out that in the Gupta and Vallabhi records 'Bhattaraka' and Paramabhattaraka' are titles applied to paramount sovereigns.¹⁰

K. Gopalachari observes that the expression 'Bhattaraka' is a title applied to kings is evident from the fact that in Pallava grants it is applied to Maharajas.¹¹

The copper plate grants of this dynasty show some names of brahmins - Agnisarma, Indrasarma, Sivasarma, Dasasarma, Rudrasarma, etc., and a few names ending with suffix "Swami" e.g. Bolaswami, Kesavaswami. So the common name ending are Sarma, Varma, Swami, etc. Some names are ^{borne} ~~borne~~ by ladies and men eg., Paramabhattarika Mahadevi, Prithvimula. The practice of naming the grandsons after their grand-fathers was very common. As has been mentioned elsewhere¹², names of places are found in the inscriptions of the Vishnukundins and other contemporary dynasties of the Andhra Desa in the post-Satavahana and pre-Chalukyan period.

TRADE: If the state of trade can be judged by the coinage i.e. by the variety and number of coins used or issued, it would

appear that trade and industry flourished during the period of Vishnukundins. The vast trade of the period is also indicated by the charities of the rulers of this period. Govindavarman-I was munificent bestower of gifts of villages, fields, gold, elephants, horses, cows, bulls, couches, seats, vehicles, drinks, foods, vessels, houses, dresses, ornaments, virgins, and male and female slaves. The large number of Vishnukundin coins¹³ from Ramathirtham, Yeleswaram, Bhongir taluk, and some places in Maharashtra such as Paunar in Wardha district, also attest to a busy trade in these parts of the kingdom.

Industries and Commerce:

Workers connected with buildings, polishers, iron workers, potters, artisans, writers (lekhakas), goldsmiths, stone-polishers, stone-masons, carpenters appear to have been in the service of the kings. Most of these craftsmen were well to do and their artistic taste was something noteworthy. The cave temples of Vijayawada, the secular and religious building complex at Keesaragutta and other places brought to light in the course of archaeological excavations, the copper plate grants and rings with circular seals, coins, etc., of these monarchs, the stone plaque of mother Goddess, and decorated globular earthen pot from Keesaragutta are the best examples of their craftsmanship and artistic taste.

In the Vishnukundin kingdom, as in India at all times, agriculture was the main industry. Their inscriptions record gifts of villages to monastic institutions and agraharas to brahmins.

The land grants of ^{the} Vishnukundins do not show the division of administrative system. Incidentally the inscriptions of the Salankayanas whom the Vishnukundins subjugated and occupied Vengi Desa, throw some light. The kingdom of Salankayanas was divided into Visayas. The territory around the capital was not included in the Kudraharavishaya. Ahara, rattha, and Vishaya denote the same territorial division,. Below the Vishaya was grama and below that pallika or pallika grama (a hamlet). No division between Vishaya and grama is mentioned. Under the Eastern Chalukyas 'Desa' denoted a kingdom of which 'Vishaya' were divisions.¹⁴ Therefore it may be safely concluded that the Vishnukundin dominion was also divided into number of Vishayas each consisting of number of villages, administered either directly by the kings or through the feudatories. Indrabhattarakavarma was stated to be the master of the entire Chakravarti-Kshetra¹⁵ probably meaning the emperors territory or domain.

The Vishnukundin monarchs must have evidently followed the Arthasastra of Kautilya in the administration of their kingdom though their copper plate grants are silent, in this regard. According to Kautilya¹⁶, the king shall employ as ministers such as are born of high family and possessed of wisdom, purity of purpose, bravery and loyal feelings in as much as ministerial appointments shall purely depend on qualifications. Having divided the spheres of their powers and having definitely taken into consideration the place and time where and when they have to work, such persons shall be employed as ministerial

officers (amatyah). Villages consisting each of not less than a hundred families and of not more than five hundred and families of agricultural people of 'Sudra' caste, with boundaries extending as far as a 'Krosa' (2250 yards) or two, and capable of protecting each other shall be formed. Those who perform sacrifices, spiritual guides, priests, and those learned in the Vedas shall be granted Brahmadeya lands yielding sufficient produce and exempted from taxes and fines. Lands prepared for cultivation shall be given to tax-payers only for life, unprepared lands shall not be taken away from those who are preparing them for cultivation. If cultivators pay their taxes easily, they may be favourably supplied with grains, cattle and money. The king shall bestow on cultivators only such favour and remission as will tend to swell the treasury, and shall avoid such as will deplete it.

A king with depleted treasury will eat into the very vitality of both citizens and country people. The king shall not only keep in good repair timber and elephant forests, buildings, and mines created in the past but also set up new ones.¹⁷

A wise king can make even the poor and miserable elements of his sovereignty happy and prosperous.¹⁸

The Vishnukundin kings were constantly engaged in wars and as such the duties concerning administration must have been carried by the ministerial officers (amatyas) assisted by other officials like headmen of the village, etc., mentioned as 'Vishayamahattara' in Polumburu plates of the Eastern Chalukyan king Jayasimha Vallabha¹⁹, or "Gramavridha" mentioned in Godavari plates (set II) of Prithvimula.²⁰

The Vishnukundin administration was keen in collecting different taxes. "The Vishnukundin charters usually exempt the gift villages from the payment of the 'Kara' alone and other exemptions are met with only in the Tummalagudem plates.²¹ The word 'Kara' occurs in the Ramathirtham plates of Indravarma and Polamburu plates of Madhavavarma IV, which denotes tax in general to be collected from the cultivators of land and people of other professions.²²

Substantial part of the exchequer appears to have been spent for construction of temples, monasteries, assembly halls, irrigation tanks, wells, and for keeping old ones in good repair. Their military administration also must have received a good part of the royal treasury. Madhavavarman II appears to have been a powerful war-lord, who had at his command an enormous army, consisting 8000 elephants, 10 crores of horses, and countless foot soldiers.²³

The military strength is no doubt grossly exaggerated. Nevertheless, he must have had a large army in his service, to vanquish the kings of other dynasties and appropriate their royalty and bring under his sway vast territories. Kautilya²⁴ says that a large number of effete persons is better in as much as they can be employed to do other kinds of works in the camp to serve the soldiers fighting in battle fields, and to terrify the enemy by its number.

Vikramendrabhattaraka-II is said to be the victor in innumerable chaturdanda battles²⁵. Hastikosa, Virakosa, mentioned in Pulomburu plates of Madhavavarman IV, Vallabha

figuring in Tummalagudem grant I, indicate the designations of the military officials. Hastikosa, Virakosa, and Vallabha may be the designations of the officers respectively, in charge of the elephant, infantry and cavalry forces of the king.²⁶ 'Skandhavara' at Kudavada,²⁷ and Velpur²⁸, which figures in the Vishnukundin inscriptions indicate army headquarters or military encampments during war times. The skandhavara is a military encampment inhabited by the common people along with soldiers. In olden times the king used to be followed by a part of his civilian population too in order to ensure security. This encampment was generally situated near the prospective battle field.²⁹

The expenditure must have been equally more on performing several Vedic sacrifices such as agnishtoma, vajapeya, bahu-suvarna, paundarika, asvamedha, kratusahasra, sarvamedha, rajasuya, purushamedha, etc., by the Vishnukundin monarchs like Madhavavarman II and also for maintaining Ghatikas.³⁰ The monarchs must have collected money for all the above mentioned activities by demanding from the subjects or by seeking subscriptions (Bhikshetra, beg benovolences) from citizens and country people alike under false pretences of carrying this or that kind of business. Persons taken in concert shall publicly pay handsome donations and with this example, the king may demand of others among his subjects as laid down by Kautilya.³¹

People enjoyed "right to religion" during the period of Vishnukundins, as we have seen all the important religions, viz., Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism, Vaishnavism, and other cults such as cult of Mother Goddess etc., flourished on account of religious tolerance of the kings. The performance of Vedic sacrifices appear to have become popular, for most of the ruling kings of this age claim to have performed the asvamedha and a number of other sacrifices. The very fact that they have taken credit for performing them shows that sacrifices and the Vedic religion of which they form an adjunct was very popular at the time. Besides the hieratic cult of sacrifices, the worship of the gods of the puranic pantheon, specially Siva and his attendant deities, was very much in vogue.

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R E S U M E

1. Preamble:-

As already been made it clear in the preface, this study is divided into two parts. A brief account of the political history of the dynasties that ruled Andhra Desa from the fall of Satavahanas to the rise of Early Chalukyas and comprehensive study of the Vishnukundins, including their genealogy and chronology, their capital, their contribution to language, literature and education, etc., based on literary, epigraphical and archaeological evidences, are included in the first part. The second part consists of settlement and structural pattern, religious and secular architecture, art, religion, material culture including pottery, coinage etc., social and economic conditions during the Vishnukundin period.

Part I of the thesis has been devoted entirely for highlighting the political and cultural history of the early dynasties of Andhra Desa during the period under consideration with particular references to the Vishnukundins where the sources from literature, epigraphy, published and unpublished works of eminent scholars have been utilised. Archaeological evidences have also been used to some extent wherever it was found necessary.

The second part of this work is mainly based on archaeology rather than other traditional historical evidences. The chapters in this part have been so divided as to give a clear understanding

to the readers and also to distinguish how Archaeology contributes to History in bridging up the lacunae.

Keeping this in view, the division of chapters, has been made in this work taking care to avoid repetitions, overlappings, etc., etc.,

In this process there may appear to be some repetitions but since they are based on different sets of evidences and corroborate each other, they are to be stated.

Now, the highlights of this work are elucidated below.

2. The antiquity of the Andhras:-

The Andhras of the past have left some glorious monuments which are looked with reverence and pride by the people of the country and it will be in the fitness of things if the history and religious and cultural ideals of their founders are studied in a more scientific manner and greater detail. The Andhras form a distinct territorial and cultural entity, making rich contributions to the stream of Indian History. From the earliest times Andhra has been a centre of great political, economic and cultural activity. It has played a prominent part in the fusion of the cultures of the north and the south and in the development of the Indian culture. The antiquity of the term "Andhra" has been traced to the epics¹, Puranas², rock-edicts of Asoka³, Buddhist literature⁴, early Tamil literature⁵, Sanskrit literature⁶, early prakrit Inscriptions⁷, and accounts of foreign travellers⁸,

leading to the conclusion that the Andhras were a powerful nation ruling over a portion of the Deccan, south of the Vindhya ever since the Mauryan period or even earlier from the days of the Brahmanas.

3. The pre-Chalukyan history of the Andhra Desa since the disappearance of the Satavahanas is a period marked by the mushrooming of several royal dynasties. The south western parts of the empire came under the Chutus and after them the Kadambas, the Andhra-desa fell under the less powerful and short lived dynasties. In less than four and half centuries it saw the Ikshvakus, the Brihatphalayanans, the Salankayanas, the Ananda gotras and the Vishnukundins rise and fall in quick succession.

4. Name of the dynasty which is correct:-

The Vishnukundins rose to power on the down fall of the Ikshvakus in the early decades of the 4th century and ruled upto the end of the sixth century of the Christian era over lower Deccan and coastal Andhra. One recent scholar⁹ suggested that the name of this dynasty is "Vishnukundi" and not "Vishnukundin" as has been usually taken. An attempt is made in this work to prove that the above argument is not correct and that the eminent scholars like HULTZSCH, SEWELL, Dubreuil, K.V.Laxmanarao, D.C.Sircar, K.Gopalachari, N.Venkataramanayya did not err in calling the name of the dynasty as "Vishnukundins" or "Vishnukundinulu".

5. Successors of the Ikshvakus:-

At Nagarjunakonda, Amaravati, Yeleswaram, Nelakondapalli etc., the post-Ikshvaku period is Characterised by the Vishnukundin coins, pottery, etc., Recent digs have yielded copper coins of Vishnukundins right over the Ikshvaku period at Yeleswaram and Nelakondapalli. If the statement that the last king of the Ikshvakus ruled till the first quarter of the 4th century A.D. is accepted, then there may not be any difficulty in admitting that the first king or founder of the Vishnukundin dynasty was a contemporary of the Ikshvakus of Nagarjunakonda or Vijayapuri¹⁰ according to the archaeological evidences now available. The archaeological finds discovered during the excavations conducted at Yeleswaram on the banks of river Krishna, proved that the Ikshvakus were succeeded by the Vishnukundins.

6. Origin:-

Scholars are divided into two groups, some contending that the Vishnukundins were outsiders who came to Telugu country along with some invaders and established themselves there as its rulers; while others upholding the view that they were the indigeneous to this region who rose to power and fame by their own efforts. It has been proved that the Vishnukundins originally belonged to a royal family of central India, gradually came down and settled in Andhra country as ordinary feudatory chiefs and subsequently rose to power by their own efforts and heroism by reducing to subjection other petty kings and annexing their lands. It is

quite probable that the Vishnukundins rose to power in the present Telangana region which was not under the sway of any royal family and this must have had happened under the influence of Vakatakas.

7. Extent of their Empire:-

The epigraphical evidences supported by the archaeological and numismatic discoveries show that the Vishnukundins kingdom at its zenith extended from the western sea, upto River Narmada on the north, and river Pennar in the south and Srikakulam on the east (See Map).

8. Genealogy and Chronology:-

The genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundin dynasty have become a subject of controversy among the scholars. The discovery of the Tummalagudem copper plates has led to the re-examination of the subject by many scholars. S.Sankaranarayana^m propounded a new theory, setting aside all other theories regarding the genealogy and chronology of the Vishnukundins, on the basis of the reasons given by him and on the known regnal years of the kings of the family.^{10(a)} His scheme is stated to be based on the facts supplied by the old and new source materials; is free from unnecessary assumptions and minimise the gap between the dates of the two sets of the Pulomburu plates; that the total period allotted to the eight ruling monarchs is only 225 years in average about 28 years for each monarch and that it is not unreasonable.

V.V.Mirashi did not agree with the views of S.Sankaranarayanan, and differed from the latter especially in placing the Tummalagudem grant I of Govinda Varman before that of grant II of Vikramendrabhattaraka. Of all the theories propounded by several scholars the geneology and chronology formulated by N.Venkataramanayya appears to be the most reasonable and nearer to the facts. According to him, the Vishnukundins' rule must have begun with Indravarmaan in 358 A.D. and ended in 594 A.D. during the reign of Madhavavarman IV. This theory is therefore accepted in this monograph.

9. Influence of Satavahanas on Vishnukundin's Culture:-

Of all the dynasties that ruled over Andhra Desa after the fall of mighty Satavahana empire, the Vishnukundins proved to be their true successors in respect of culture, religion, language, art and architecture, etc., though there is a gap of the two dynasties¹¹. This is discussed at length in part I chapter III(iii).

10. Royal titles and emblem of Vishnukundins:-

An exhaustive study of the growth of Ancient Indian Kingship through the changing royal titles and epithets has been made basing on the literary and epigraphical sources available. The Vishnukundin kings did not attach much importance to the titles like Maharaja, etc.; and even though they were supreme kings they did not always consider themselves supreme.

The emblem of the Vishnukundins and its significance has been established. The lion emblem of Vishnukundins was represented on the seals of their charters from Tummalagudem, Ramathirtham, Chikkula, etc. The lion signifies fierce energy and undaunted courage, which are the very qualities necessary for success in war. The lion was the Andhra emblem and their successors, the Vishnukundins, might have retained it. The lion device was perhaps Buddhist in origin and that the lion motif at Amaravati is sufficient evidence for this view.

11. Capital of Vishnukundins:-

None of the records furnish us with any definite information regarding the capital of these rulers. Scholars have identified different places as capital city of the Vishnukundins each propounding his own theory basing themselves on circumstances or the law of weight of probability. Vamkonda¹², Amaravati¹³, Lendulura¹⁴ (modern Denduluru), Tewar¹⁵, were some of the places identified as their probable capitals. Even Tiruvur¹⁶, Velpuru¹⁷, Indrapalanagaram¹⁸, are not spared from the position. But we have more reliable and solid material evidence for the identification of the site of their capital city.

The outer and inner fortification walls, numerous religious and secular structures inside the fort, the coins, the pottery, and other concomittant finds all datable to the Vishnukundin period brought to light in course of excavations at Keesaragutta, are evidences enough to prove that "Keesaragutta"¹⁹ was

once the capital of the Vishnukundins. There can be no doubt that their epithet 'Sriparvata swami padar^mudhyata' is apt when the topographical features of the hillock at Keesara are considered.

12. Language, Literature and Education:-

The inscriptions of the Vishnukundins, tell us that there were Brahmins who were conversant with the Vedas, and Vedangas during the times besides Buddhist scholars. All the Vishnukundin kings patronised Sanskrit literature and Telugu language. They donated Agraharas to the Brahmins who were scholars and poets. The language of the Vishnukundin records is simple, chaste and direct and are almost free from errors. It is not unreasonable to think that the influence of the Vakatakas was there on the Vishnukundins in respect of poetic style in writing the inscriptions. Ghatika denoted an educational institution where the knowledge of the Vedas was imparted to the Brahmins. The establishment of a GHATIKA was regarded as a pious act which had to be performed according to certain regulations prescribed by tradition and law. It was regarded as a meritorious act which secured happiness to its founder in the heaven.

13. "KEESARAGUTTA" Excavations:-

Archaeological investigations carried out on the top of the hill-Keesaragutta revealed fortification wall with gates, secondary fortification wall, palace complex, square brick shrines, rows of Siva lingas, etc., besides valuable antiquities

including red-ware pottery, beautiful terracottas, stuccos, beads, etc., all belonging to the Vishnukundin period. This is the only fortification wall that has been brought to light by the spade of archaeologist next to the fortification traced at Nagarjunakonda.²⁰ The fortification wall, now in ruins, on the top of the hill at Keesaragutta, encompassing the huge brick structure of religious as well as secular buildings show that it was a hill-fort (Giri-Durga) constructed in the post-Satavahana period by the Vishnukundin rulers following the cannons of Hindu Science of architecture as enunciated by the ancient writers viz., Kautilya, etc.,

14. Results of the recent excavations at other sites in Andhra Pradesh:-

Archaeological excavations brought to light clear evidences of habitation belonging to the Vishnukundin period at Nelakondapalli of Khammam District, and Yeleswaram of Nalgonda district on the northern bank of the River Krishna. About ten Buddhist sculptures were discovered at Nelakondapalli in a private land while digging for pati earth. The pit where the idols were discovered was extended and exposed the brick structures constructed with 50 cm. x 25 cm. x 8 cm. size bricks nicely lime plastered to a thickness of over an inch. In course of the operation, hidden and visible sculptural wealth consisting of a number of broken fragments essential for moulding the broken idols were collected. Very interesting brick structures

relating to the manufacture and preservation of the marble Buddhist Idols were traced out. A trough measuring 4.45 mts. x 1.96 mts. x 0.80 mts. appears to have been intended for preserving the idols under lime plaster and that they were subsequently given high polish. Similar trough-like structures three in alignment separated by a drain were also brought to light. A thick deposit of lime is noticed in the tubs. The stratigraphy of the trial trenches dug in the mound has shown two brick structures one over the other separated by a layer containing morrum and fine sand. The first phase of the construction was made with brick mud and mortar. The brick wall in the second phase was constructed with lime mortar. The flooring and the walls were thickly plastered with lime. A Vishnukundin coin with lion on the obverse and a kalasa flanked by a lamp stand on either side inside a rayed circle on the reverse was recovered from this layer. Fragments of pottery met with at the site include decorated and designed storage jars, water jars and vessels, of red polished ware and the fabric varying from coarse to fine. A beautiful terracotta human figurine with two horns on either side of the head is found which resembles the horned dvarapalakas in the cave and other structural temples of the Vishnukundin period.

The excavations carried out at Rajahmundry have brought to light a brick wall, on the bank of the Godavari near the old stair case intended for the bathing ghat. The wall was constructed with brick of the size of 50 cm. x 25 cm. x 8 cm. The structural

activity of the earliest period consists of the remains of a wall like structure encompassing a circular structure in brick which is superimposed by the square cellas. The inner length and breadth of the cella is 2.3 mts. x 1.7 mts. There is a wall running east to west, a few metres away on the north from the above cella. This wall must be an enclosure wall but its construction was abruptly stopped for reasons unknown. This incomplete wall is seen in bits in the same alignment, each bit having ends with successively receding courses. Mud has been used as bonding material.

Yeleswaram, a village located in a valley on the bank of the river Krishna contiguous to Nagarjunakonda valley, caught the attention of the pre-historic man who settled down here before the dawn of civilisation and it remained a cradle of culture in historical period. Once it was a flourishing city at the time of Ikshvakus. The excavations carried out at Yeleswaram yielded a hoard of Vishnukundin coins right over the post-Ikshvaku period and it can be inferred that this valley came under the suzerainty of Vishnukundins after the Ikshvakus²⁸. An enclosure wall was brought to light pertaining to this period. A brick structure appeared to have been intended for some ritualistic import as sockets were made at regular intervals around a raised pedestal for the erection of wooden columns to support a canopy. A brick structure something like a chamber was discovered which functioned probably as a votive shrine for

installing a Bana linga. Another brick structure of the nature of votive shrine installed with a Banalinga was found. The enclosure wall was renovated during this period in the same alignment and the stratum was full of fallen debris. The brick structure referred to above continued in this period and was installed with Banalinga connected by an abhisheka drain. The most noteworthy finds of the period are the five miniature votive shrines found near the temple complex at Yeleswaram. These shrines have a low adhistana, flat kapota and vimana of two steps surmounted by a semi-circular Sikhara incised with an inscription, the characters of which resemble some of the characters of the inscriptions of the Vishnukundin period datable to circa 4th century A.D. It has a Linga on the vedi inside.

15. Their constructional activities:-

During the period of Vishnukundins the constructional activities were on the increase as is evidenced from their copper plate grants viz., Tummalagudem Set I and II. The Vishnukundins inherited the artistic traditions of both the Ikshvakus, whom they succeeded and the Vakatakas with whom they came into contact. The cave temples of Vijayawada, the structural temples such as Satyavolu, Kadamalakalava, Mukhalingam go back to the Vishnukundin period. The palace complex with massive enclosure walls, brick shrines etc. all constructed with bricks measuring 50 x 25 x 8 cms. at Keesaragutta, show that the building architecture flourished during that period

and that the ancient Silpa Sastras were followed in all respects. To cite an example, the shape of the palace complex is like the "MAULIKA" mansion described in MANASARA²¹. The Maulika mansion is shaped like a winnowing basket and consists of three rows of buildings. It is likely that two more building complex consisting number of mansions inside, existed continuous to the above palace complex as evidenced from the two compound walls exposed outside the enclosure wall, in the recent excavations. Such constructional activities have also been noticed at Yeleswaram, Nelakondapalli, Rajahmundry, Gummadam, Gollathagudi, etc. in Andhra Pradesh.

The Vishnukundin contribution to art and architecture hardly won the recognition it deserves at the hands of scholars who devoted themselves to the study of Indian art and architecture.

16. Art:-

The Vishnukundin period witnessed alround progress in the field of fine arts. The votive shrines with or without Bana-lingas inside these shrines found in the Yeleswaram excavations,²² A beautiful sculpture of Vishnu²³ whose head and feet are mutilated found at Yeleswaram, the early sculpture of Narasimha²⁴ showing Vishnu in anthromorphic form and also in animal form, discovered over a hillock at Kondamotu, a stone-plaque of mother Goddess,²⁵ the decorated globular pot²⁶ recovered from Keesaragutta are the best examples of Vishnukundin's art. Beautifully modelled human and animal stucco figurines used for decorating the walls of the buildings were exhumed at Keesaragutta. A terracotta figure finely depicting a mother holding a child in her left

hand has been found. The head of the figure is broken. The collection of the stuccos include a stucco with floral designs, head of a lion, head of a swan-like bird, animal face with circular eyes, a head of a tiger with nose, mouth and two incisors prominent. Some stuccos are painted in ochre, yellow and green.

Chistled or carved semi-circular, rectangular bricks, some of them plastered with lime one painted in ochre, yellow and green have been met with.

17. Religion:-

The age of the Vishnukundins is a transitional period in the religious history of the country. Though the early kings of the Vishnukundin dynasty like Govindavarman I and Vikramendra-bhattaraka followed Buddhism, the later rulers of the family were staunch followers of Brahmanic Hindu Dharma, they styled themselves as 'Parama-maheswaras',²⁷ and their family deity was "SRI PARVATA SWAMIN". They also worshipped Ganapati, Siva, Vishnu, Devi (Durga) as evidenced from the carvings of the Vijayawada groups of cave temples, with special preference to Siva. They built a number of temples, throughout their kingdom in honour of Siva which includes innumerable miniature votive shrines found at Yeleswaram and the row of lingas at Kesaragutta. All the Vishnukundins appear to be staunch followers of Pasupata sect influenced by Agamas, and also patronised the doctrine of "Panchayatana". The worship of Vishnu, the cult of mother goddess, along with Buddhism and Jainism were also popular during the Vishnukundin period as the kings were known for their religious tolerance.

Buddhism which appears to have been dominant during the time of the Satavahanas began to show signs of decay under the Ikshvakus, who succeeded them as rulers of the coastal Andhra. Though the stupas and viharas were still built for the Buddha by the ladies of the royal family, several of the kings and their officials followed the Brahmanic Hindu Dharma, under the Vishnukundins. Buddhism continued to lose ground steadily until it became practically extinct by the end of the Vishnukundin period.

The Vishnukundins strove hard to uphold the dharma, and spent much of their wealth in promoting goodness. They built stupas, viharas, temples, etc., and made gifts, of land and money for their upkeep.

18. Metallurgy:-

The art of working in metals during the Vishnukundin period was excellent. A flat iron piece with rivet measuring eleven centimetres in length and three centimetres in breadth, probably used as hinges for the doors and an iron spear head or a similar war weapon, 12.5 cms. in length and one centimetre in breadth have been recovered from the excavations at Keesaragutta. Another iron object 5 1/2 cms. long, slightly bulging in the middle has also been met with.

The emergence of the historical period marked the maximum usage of iron particularly during the Ikshvaku and the Vishnukundin periods.

The iron objects recovered from Yeleswaram during the excavations threw abundant light on the well flourishing iron industry.²⁹

Large number of Vishnukundin coins have been reported from several ancient sites in Andhra Desa and Maharashtra as well. A.M. Shastri~~x~~ has stated that the coins recovered in Maharashtra, at first glance, give an appearance of being copper coins and look rather heavy in proportion to their size and that a recent metallurgical analysis has revealed a peculiarity of their metallic composition in as much as they comprise an iron core with the coating of a thin sheet of copper on the surface.³⁰

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Ancient India. Bulletin of Archaeological Survey of India
APGAS	Andhra Pradesh Government Archaeological Series
APGMS	Andhra Pradesh Government Museum Series.
AR	Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India
ARE	Annual Report of Indian Epigraphy or South Indian Epigraphy
ASB	Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta
ASI	Archaeological Survey of India
ASS	Anandasrama Sanskrit Series, Poona
ASSI	Archaeological Survey of South India.
CII	Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Calcutta.
CP	Copper Plate
EA	Epigraphia Andhrica, Hyderabad
E.Chaluk-	Eastern Chalukyas
yes	
EI	Epigraphia Indica, Calcutta/Bombay/Delhi.
HCIP	History and Culture of the Indian People.
IA	Indian Antiquary, Bombay
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta
JNSI	Journal of the Numismatic Society of India, Varanasi.
JAAP	Journal Archaeology in Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad
JAH&C	Journal of Andhra History and Culture, Guntur.
JAHRs	Journal of Andhra Historical Research Society, Rajahmundry and Hyderabad.

JAU	Journal of Annamalai University, Chidambaram
JDL	Journal of Department of Letters, University of Calcutta.
JIH	Journal of Indian History, Madras
JCIH	Journal of Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Calcutta
JISOA	Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Arts.
JOR	Journal of Oriental Research, Madras
JRAS	Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, London
KSS	Kashi Sanskrit Series, Benaras
MER	Madras Epigraphical Report
Mss.Lib.	Manuscript Library
NSP.	Nirnayasagar Press Edition, Bombay
SBE	Sacred Books of the East Series, Delhi
SGP	Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, Calcutta.
SII	South Indian Inscriptions.
TSS	Trivendrum Sanskrit Series

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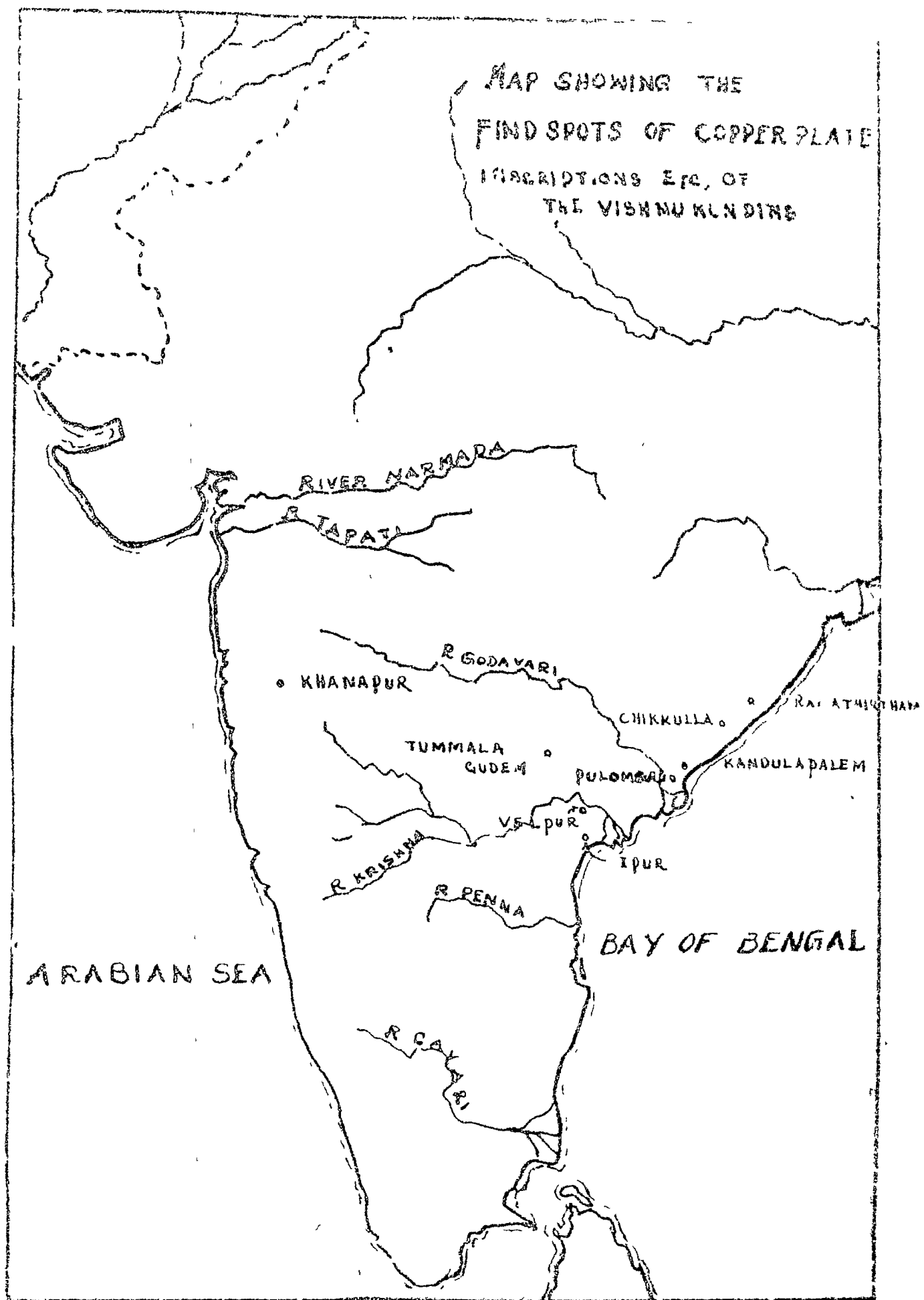
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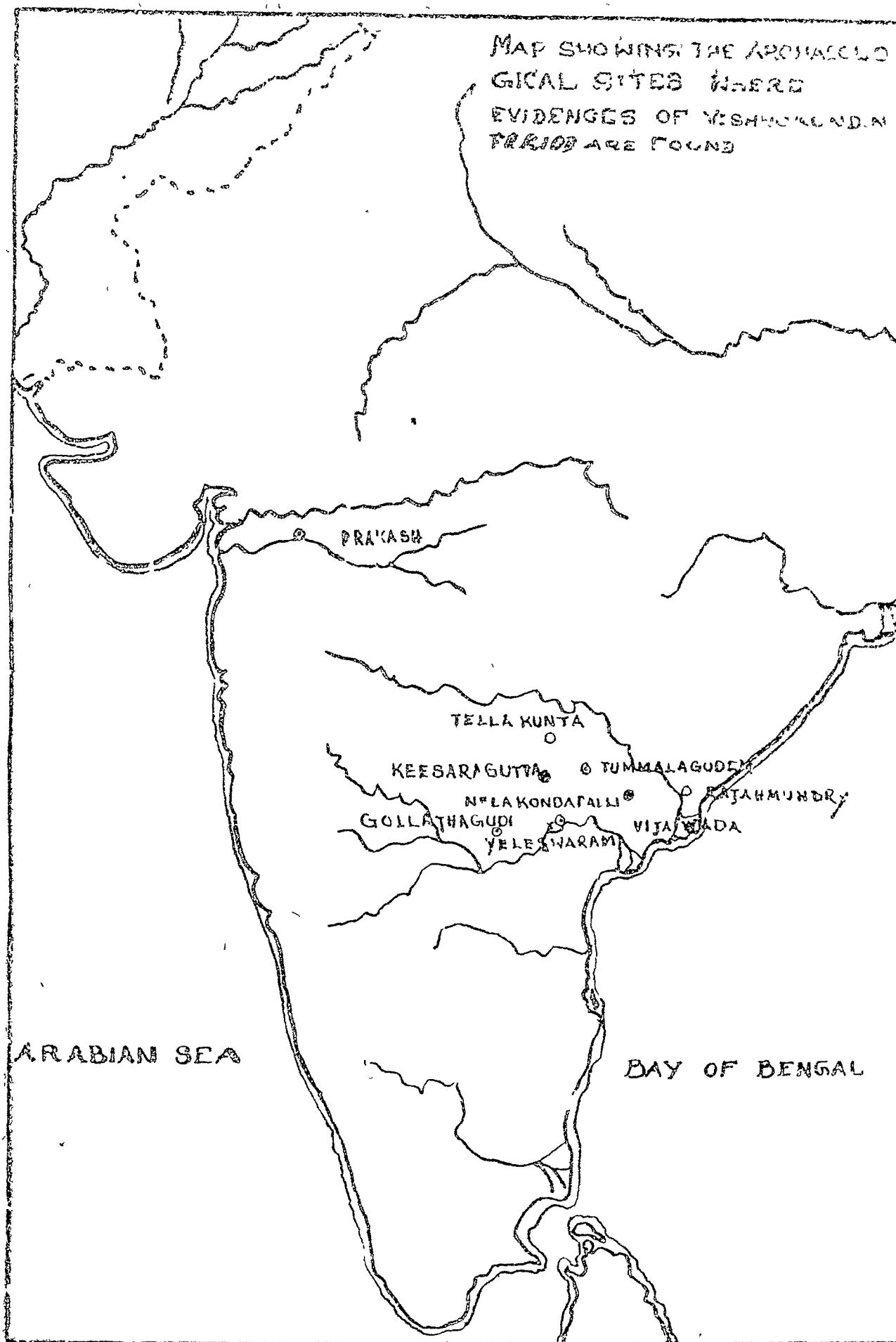
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MAP SHOWING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WHERE EVIDENCES OF VISHNUKUNDIN PERIOD ARE FOUND



ARABIAN SEA

BAY OF BENGAL

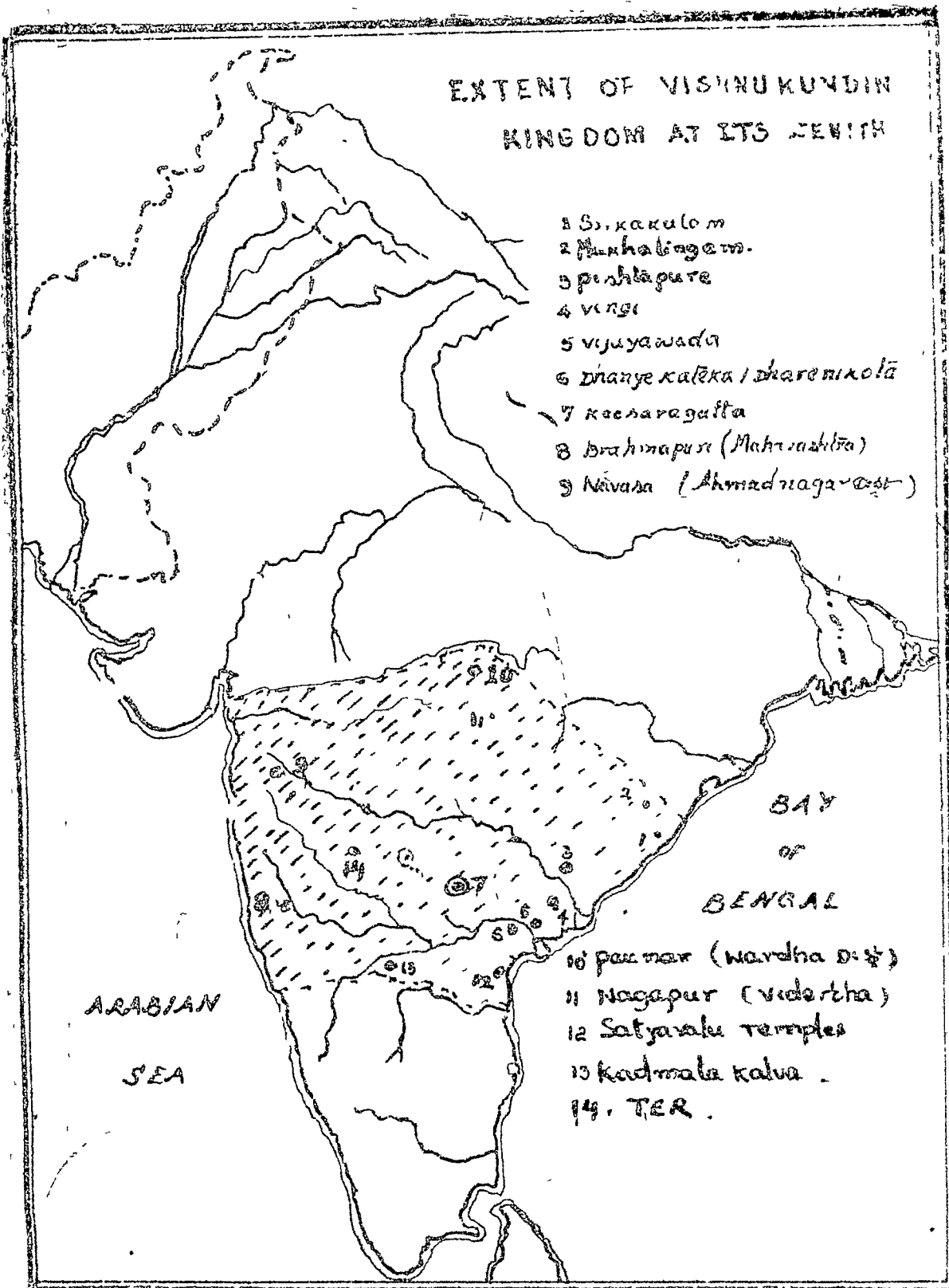
EXTENT OF VISINUKUNDIN KINGDOM AT ITS ZENITH

- 1 Sr. kakulom
- 2 Munkhaligam.
- 3 pishlapure
- 4 virgi
- 5 vijayawada
- 6 dhanyekalka / dharenikola
- 7 kacharagutta
- 8 brahmapur (Maharashtra)
- 9 Navasa (Ahmadnagar est.)

ARABIAN
SEA

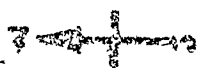
BAY
OF
BENGAL

- 10 parner (wardha dist)
- 11 Nagapur (vidhartha)
- 12 Satyavali temples
- 13 kadmalakalva
14. TER.

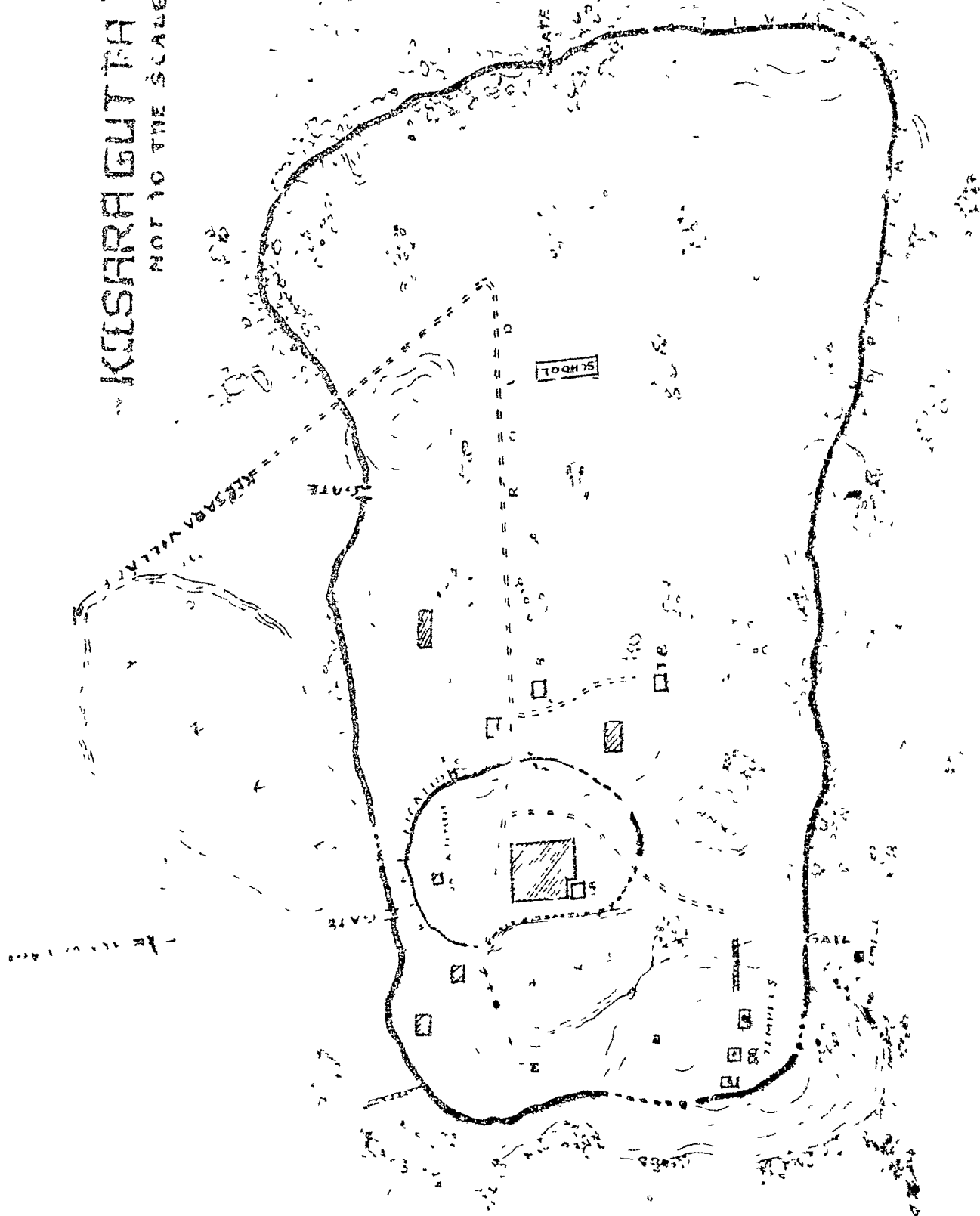


KISHARGUTTA FORT

NOT TO THE SCALE

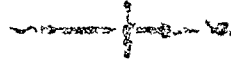
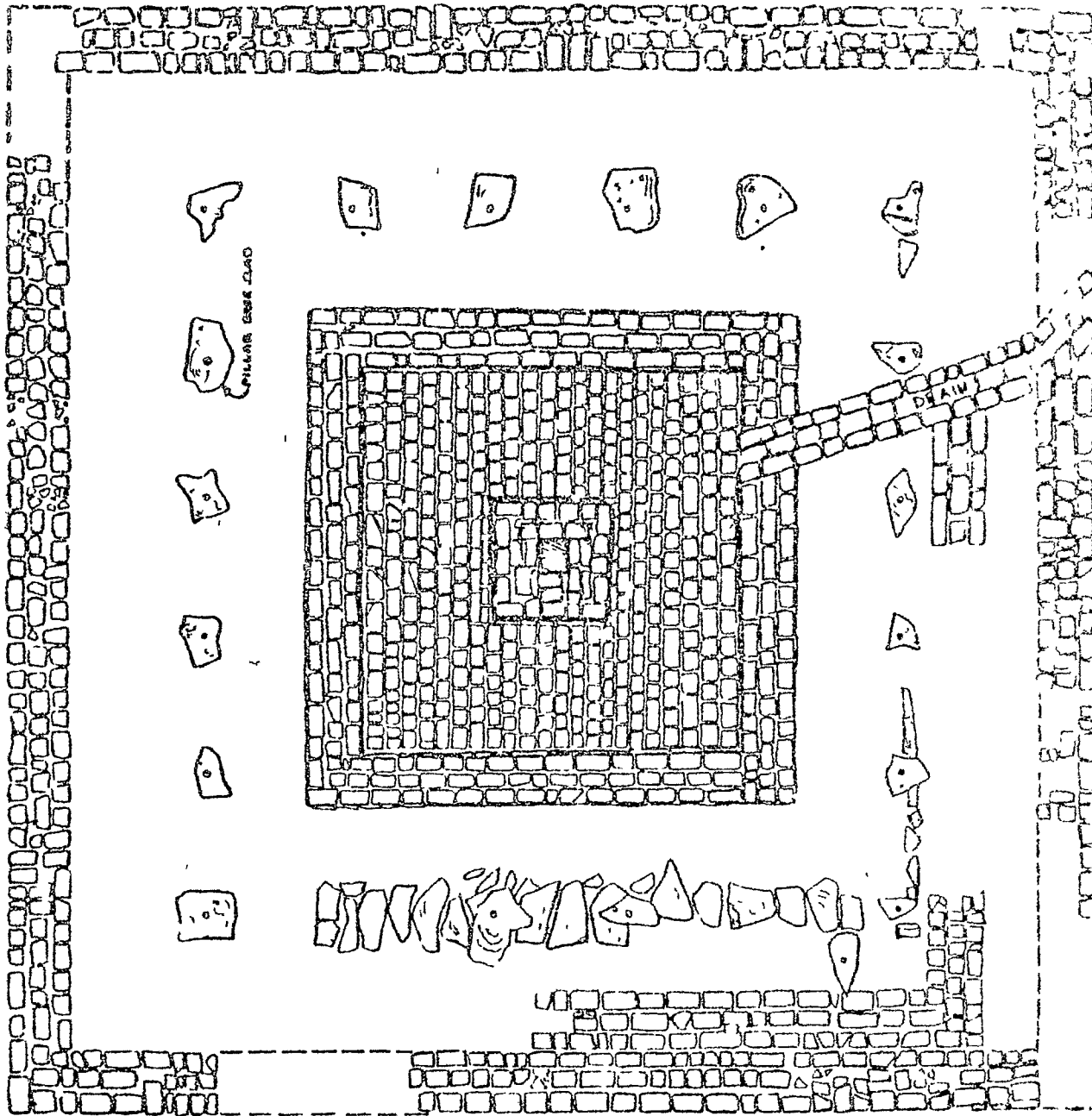


INDEX	
EXCAVATED AREA	---
TEMPLES	---
FORTIFICATION	---
MODERN ROAD	---
FOOTPATH	---
MODERN BUILDINGS	---



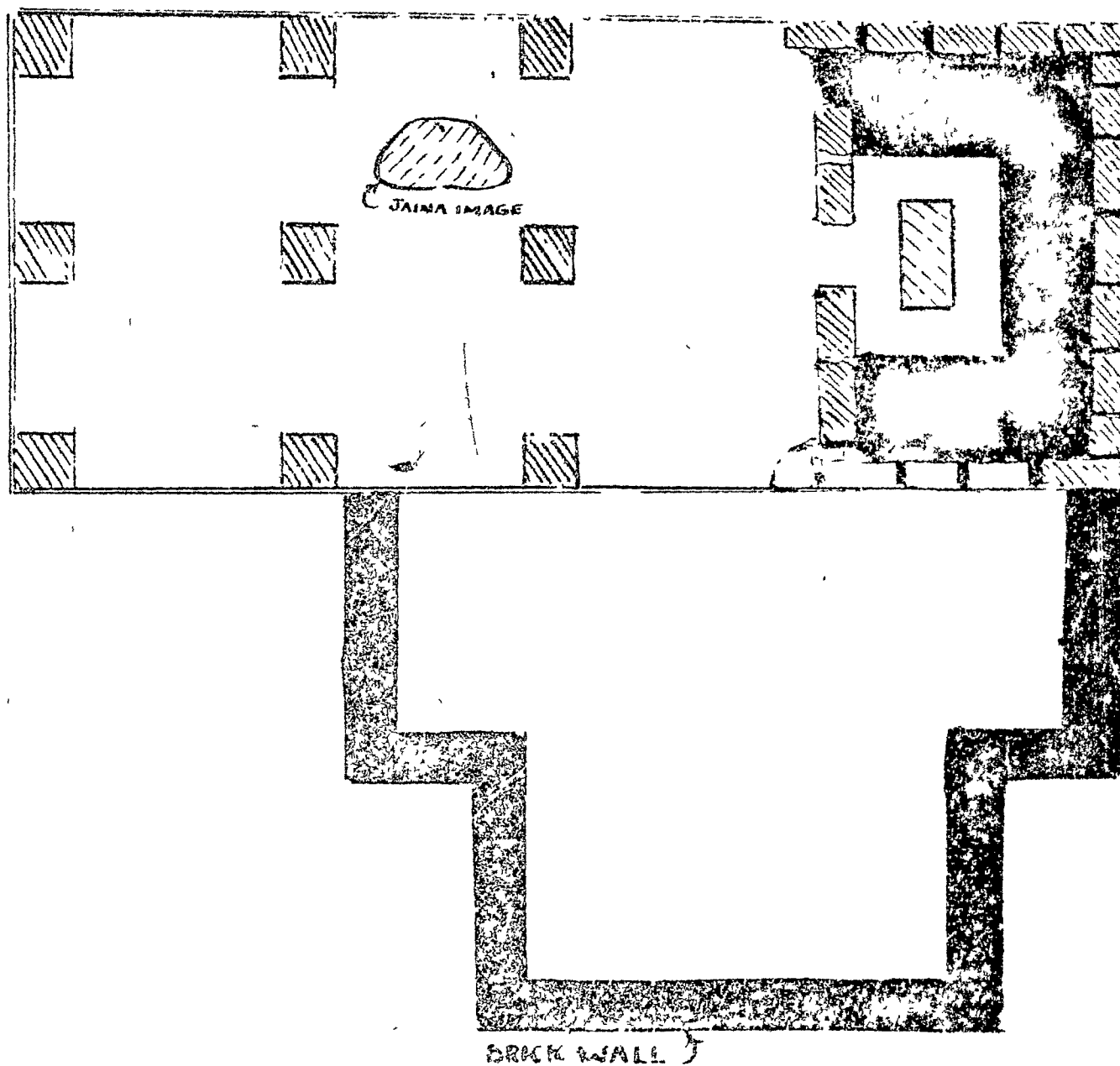
SQUARE BRICK SHRINE AT KERRA GATTA

SCALE 1 CM. = 1 METER



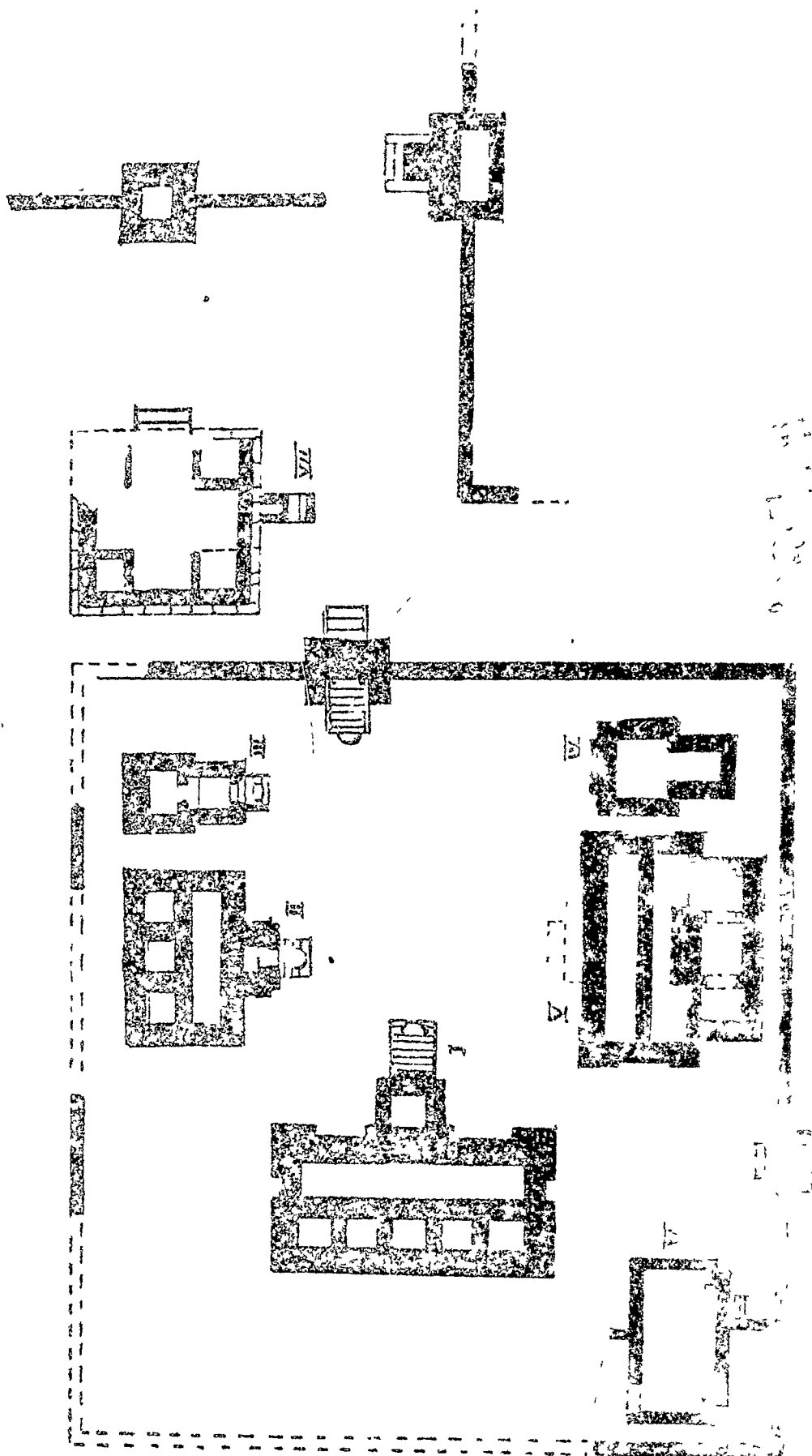
PLAN OF JAINA TEMPLE AT KEESAR GUTTA

SCALE. 2 CM. = 1 METER.

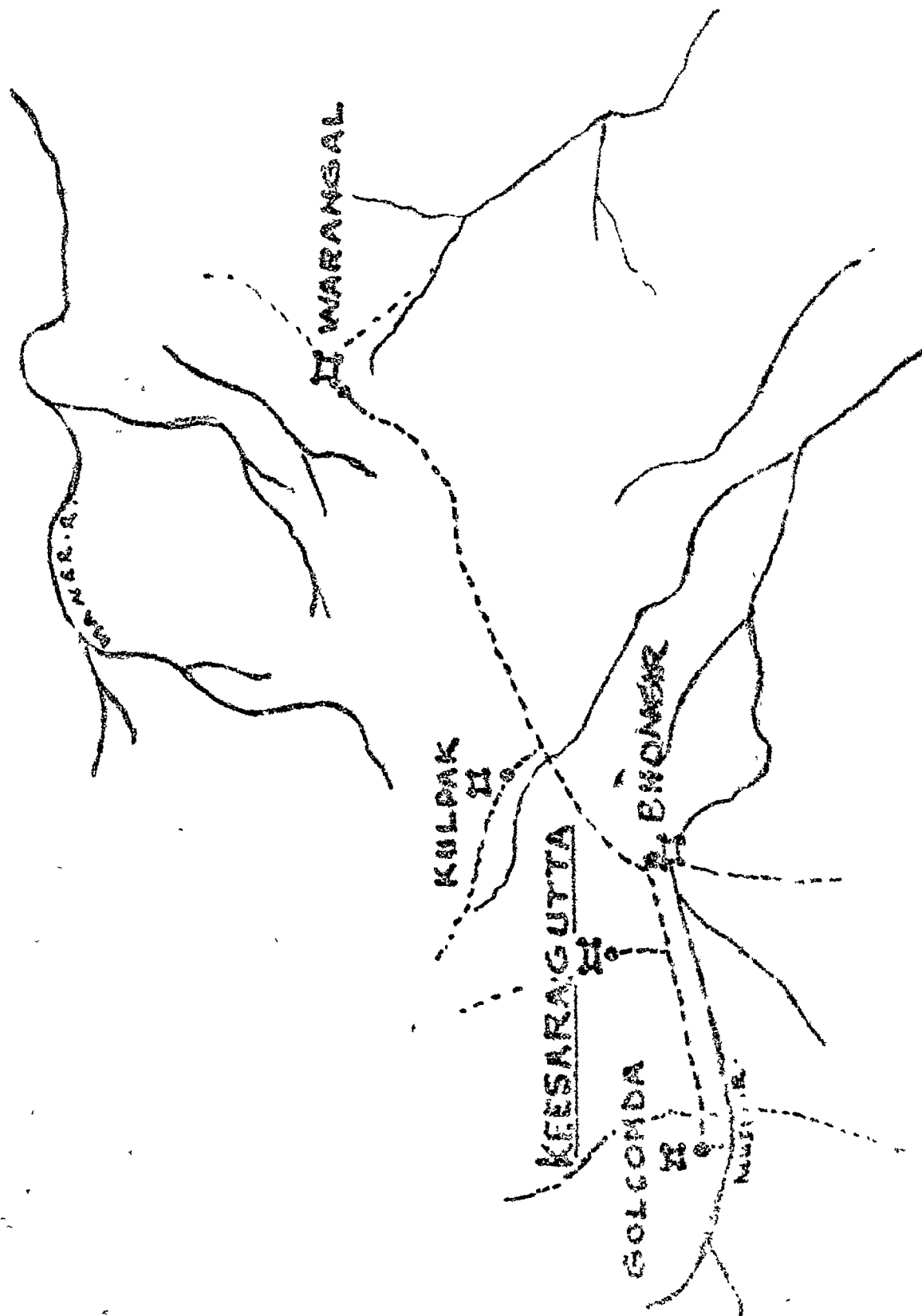


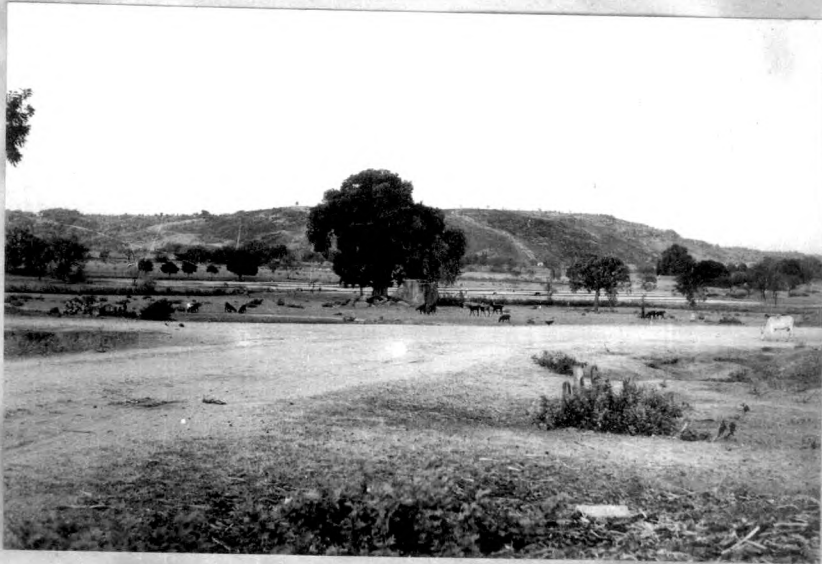
KEESARA GUTTA EXC

SCALE $\frac{1}{4}$ CM = 1 METER 1:400

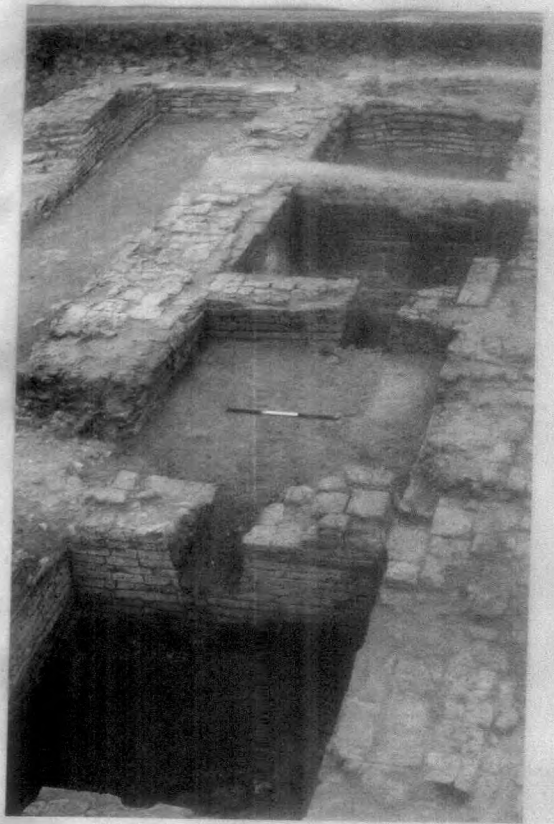


REGIONAL PLAN
SHOWING THE IMPORTANT FORTS
AROUND KEESARA GUTTA

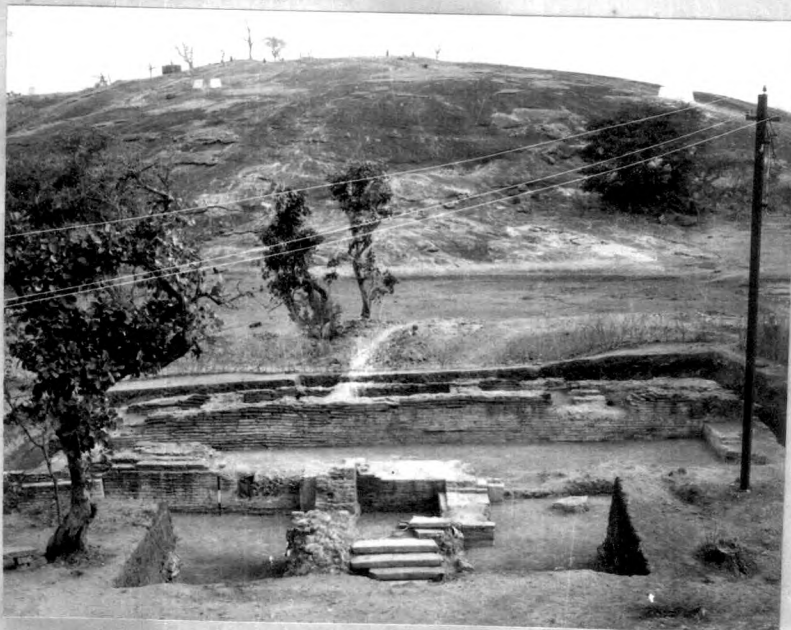




Keesaragutta - General View



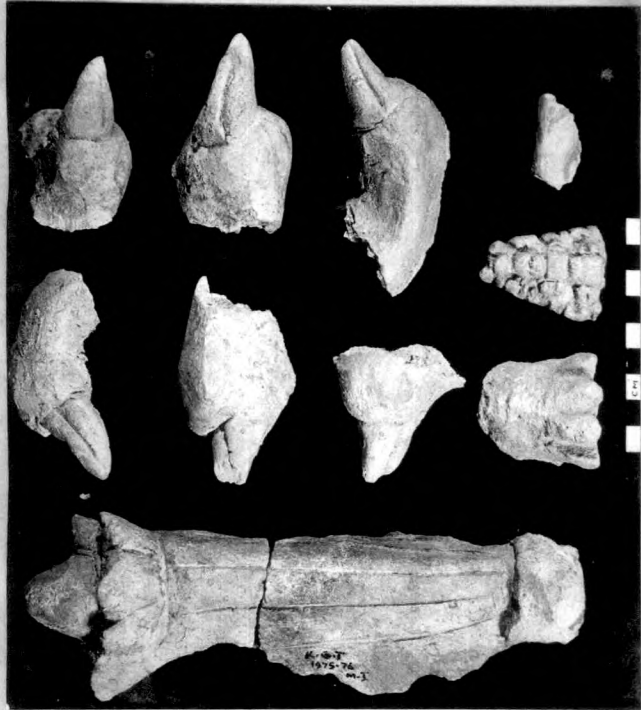
Keesaragutta - Excavated brick Structure



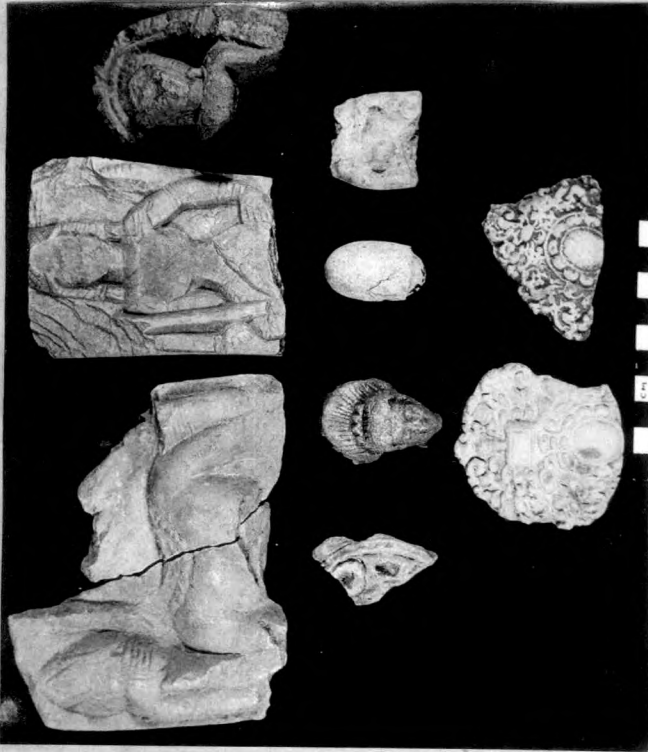
KEESARAGUTTA - PALACE COMPLEX



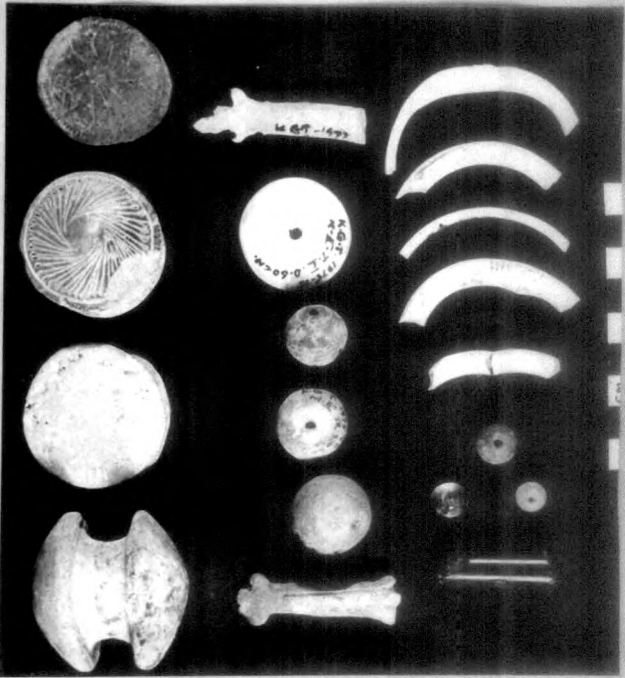
Keesaragutta - Palace Complex -
Flight of steps



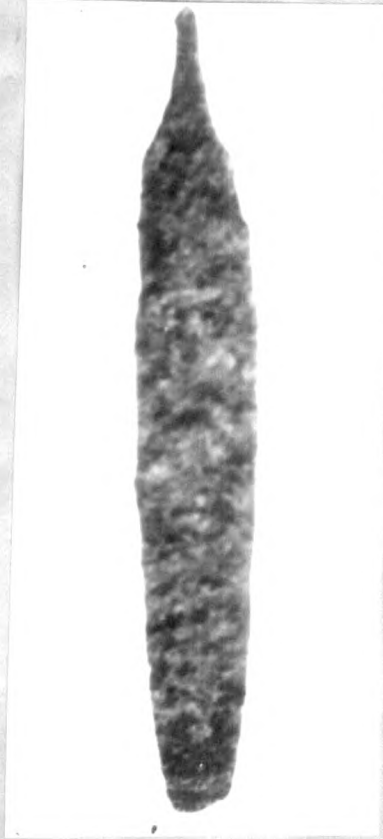
Keesaragutta - Stucco figurines



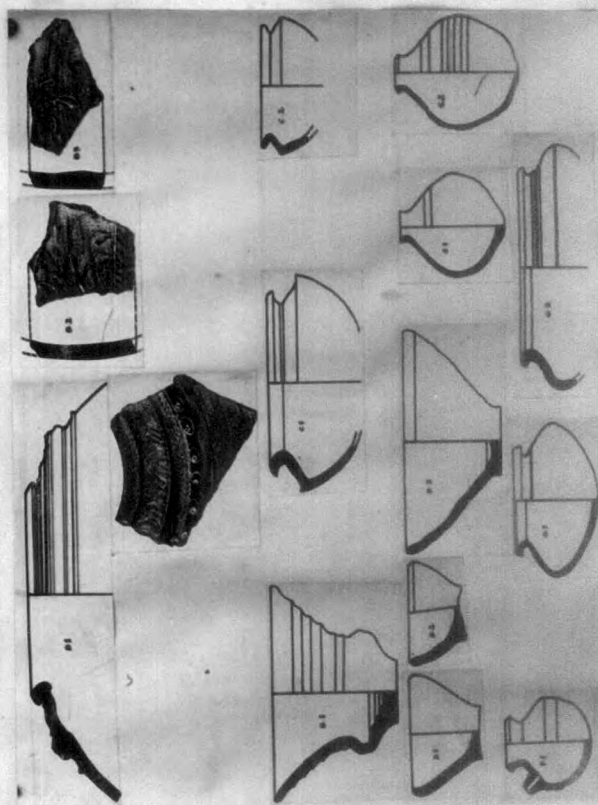
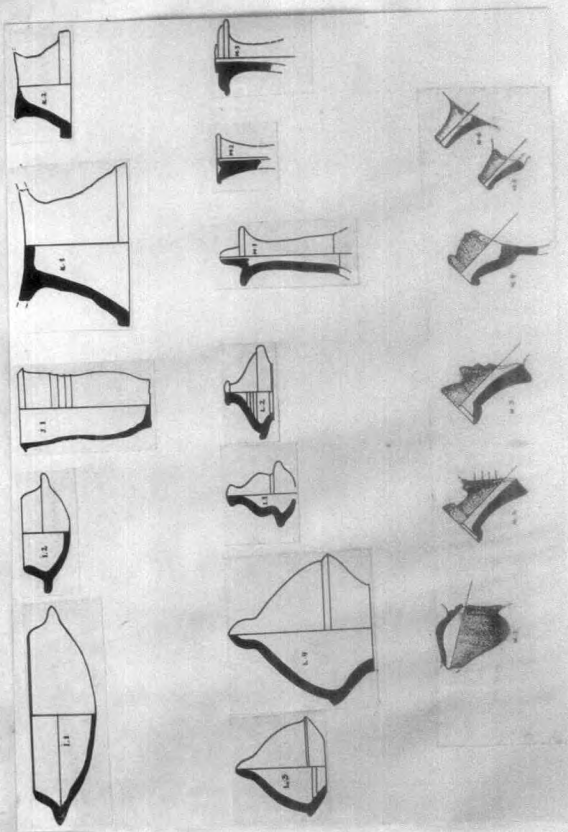
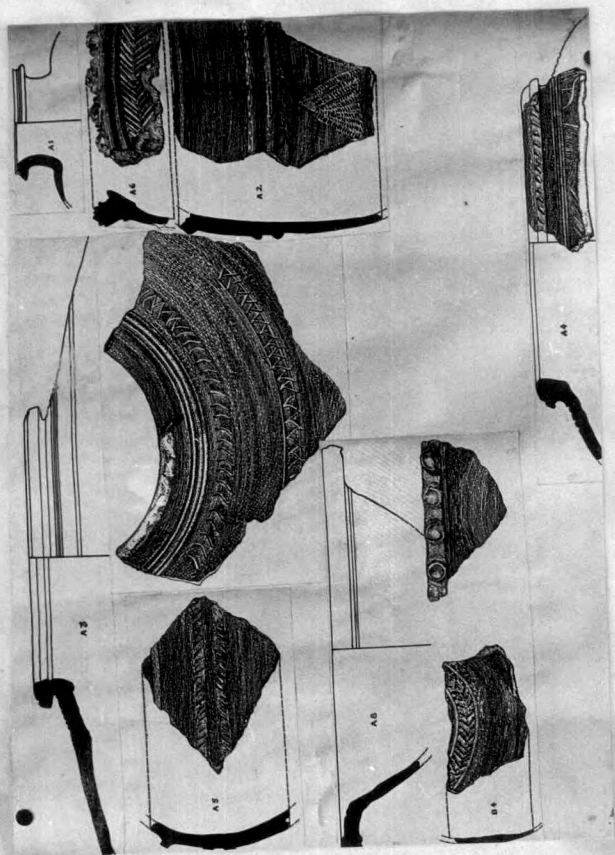
Keesaragutta - Stone and terracotta figurines



Keesaragutta - Beads - shell bangles and spools



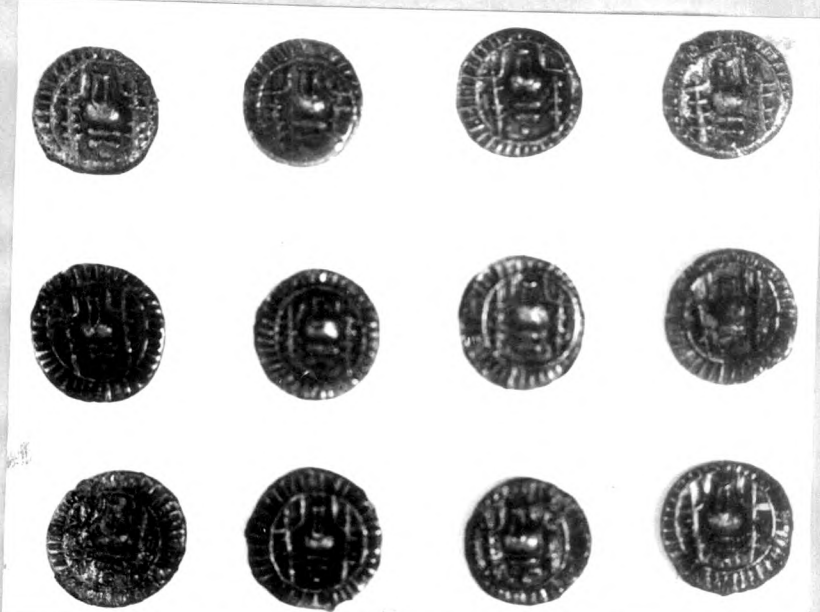
Keesaragutta - Iron tools



KEESARAGUTTA - POTTERY TYPES



Kocanagutta - Vishnakundin coins
Obverse



Kocanagutta - Vishnakundin coins
Reverse